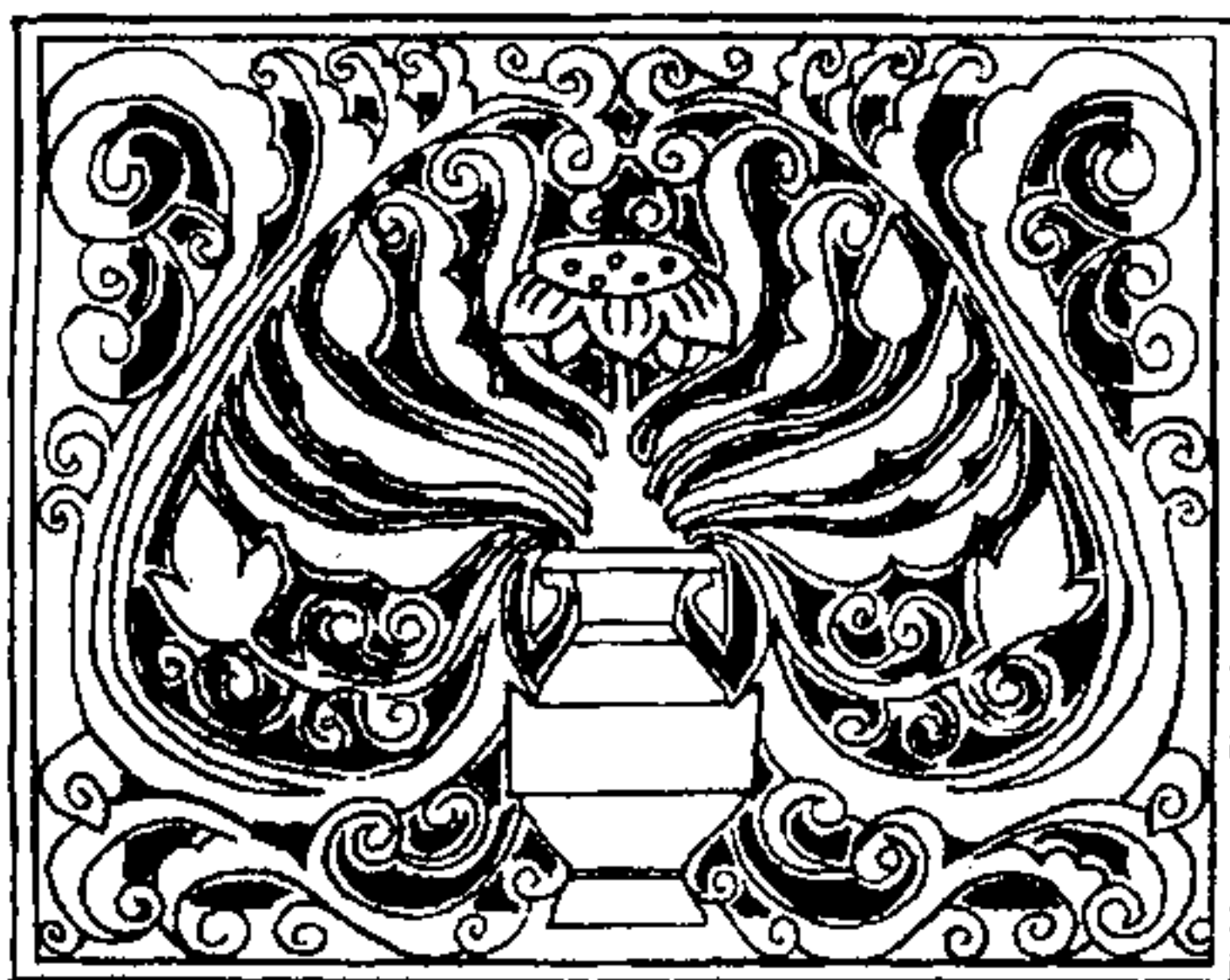




PRABUDDHA BHARATA

A Monthly Journal of Ramakrishna Order
started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896



NOVEMBER 2000

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PRABUDDHA BHARATA

ARISE! AWAKE! AND STOP NOT TILL THE GOAL IS REACHED

Vol. 105

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No. 11

VEDIC PRAYERS

प्रप्र पूष्णस्तुविजातस्य शस्यते महित्वमस्य
तवसो न तंदते स्तोत्रमस्य न तंदते ।
अर्चामि सुमन्यन्नहमंत्यूतिं मयोभुवं ।
विश्वस्य यो मन आयुयुवे मखो देव आयुयुवे मखः॥
—Rg Veda, 1.138.1

प्र हि त्वा पूषन्नजिरं न यामनि स्तोमेभिः
कृण्व ऋणवो यथा मृघ उष्ट्रो न पीपरो मृघः ।
हुवे यत्त्वा मयोभुवं देवं सख्याय मर्त्यः ।
अस्माकमांगूषान्द्युम्निनस्कृधि वाजेषु द्युम्निनस्कृधि ॥
—Rg Veda, 1.138.2

यस्य ते पूषन्सख्ये विपन्यवः क्रत्वा धित्सन्तोऽ-
वसा बुभुजिर इति क्रत्वा बुभुजिरे ।
तामनु त्वा नवीयसीं नियतुं राय ईमहे ।
अहेळमान उरुशंस सरी भव वाजेवाजे सरी भव ॥
—Rg Veda, 1.138.3

The giver and protector of food and wealth to countless beings, Pūṣā (the Sun) is adored by one and all. There is no end to his glory, as people continually adore him. So I too worship (*arcāmi*) the great god with a desire for lasting happiness. It is Pūṣā's nature to protect us. Even before we pray to him, he showers his grace. He increases our happiness. He is a quick bestower of boons. And he is easily pleased with sacrifices.

O celestial Lord, Pūṣā! Your speedy movements are as praiseworthy as that of the fastest horse. We shall eulogize you with *stoma* hymns. You carry us through wars, even as the camel (*uṣṭra*) carries loads through sand and snow. So we helpless mortals beseech you to make friends with us. Pleased with our prayers, make us wealthy and successful in wars.

O Sun-god! Having made friends with you and thereby being cared by you, innumerable intelligent people enjoy immense wealth and happiness continually. So I seek immense wealth from you by becoming your new friend. Do not reject my hand, O Pūṣā. You are praised by everyone! Be favourable to me and protect me in war.

Genome and Om

EDITORIAL

Craig Venter of Celera Genomics, USA, and Francis Collins of the National Human Genome Research Institute, USA, announced early this June that they had succeeded in sequencing the human genome. This is a singular event in human progress: the Genetic Age has begun. Human beings have succeeded to read the book of life, 'previously known only to God,' according to Collins. It's a great step forward, and there's no turning back at all.

You're reading this in November and possibly genomics has advanced further by now—pigs may be flying. But till the time of writing this, scientists were holding their fire. Though scientists for a moment thought they had opened the Pandora's box, they're getting into their stride quickly. We could, therefore, discuss what's happened till now.

What Scientists Have Achieved

As we all know, life begins with a single cell. The cell consists of the nucleus. Inside the nucleus are the chromosomes. Human beings have 23 pairs of chromosomes. Chromosomes carry the hereditary factors called genes. These chromosomes are made up of a chemical called DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid), RNA (ribonucleic acid) and also protein compounds. This DNA is the physical basis of hereditary material: in it is embedded, in chemical language, the code or information of how one should grow, how one should look like, what diseases one could inherit from parents, etc. Scientists are still in the dark as to the exact number of genes, but have rounded up the figure to 50,000. So these 50,000 genes in our bodies make us fair or dark, tall or short, diseased with chronic ailments or healthy, cheerful and buoyant or irritative. The genome is the genetic material—the instruction book of manufacturing the body. Scientists deci-

phered it this June.

A \$250 million project was funded by the US government for decoding the gene. Within a short time, scientists aligned the chromosomes, cut the DNA to small strands, and read what was printed in chemical language on it. It was a long process and the chain was virtually unending. But they succeeded.

The DNA is like an interminable curled ladder: the two strands of the DNA are bonded together by hydrogen bonds. There are four chemical compounds, Adenine (A), Thymine (T), Guanine (G) and Cytosine (C), called nucleotides, which form the 'rungs' of the long ladder. A,T, etc are called 'letters', and molecular biologists have read 3.1 billion such letters in the DNA. There is a system in the combination of these letters: A and T go together always even as G and C go together. Such twos are called base pairs. These base pairs may be common to all. But where there is some disease or difficulty, there is variation somewhere in some part of the long chain. Molecular biologists now know that the factory manufacturing huge human bodies, creating trouble, etc, is somewhere amongst these pairs.

In all, some 97% of the DNA has been studied but it's said that 3% can't be decoded. Of the 97% too, only some 53% has been known according to their order; the rest is still known at random. As the *Time* writers put it (3 July 2000), 'they've got the pages in the so-called book of life in the proper order but with the letters on each page scrambled.' Patrick Brown, a biochemist, says: 'Right now it's like watching a movie on TV a few pixels at a time and trying to figure out the overall story.' But despite such small difficulties, science has gone a long, long way.

What Needs to be Known

Over 1000 experts from many fields—microbiologists, computer experts, technicians—over \$250 million, and over 16 huge labs in several countries could not be engaged for fun. What could be the reason behind?

Genetics has been defined as the science of biological inheritance. Why are we either tall or short, fair or dark, obese or thin? It's all because of the genes, or rather, the instructions of the genes. The genes, carrying inheritance from parents to offspring, prompt the DNA, and the RNA, to manufacture proteins of suitable forms and chemical combinations so that these could in turn structure the body according to specifications.

Since the beginning of time, disease, suffering, misery, and death have haunted us and scientists are finding ways to remove them. Tens of diseases have been conquered, specially during the last century. If genes are studied, scientists can know the mechanism of body-building, cause of disease, ways of avoiding it, and so on. There are some ailments which are causes of concern, like Alzheimer's, diabetes, cancer, ulcers, etc. By reading the entire genome and having an ideal one on a chip, scientists of the future could find out where exactly the problem is. So the top priority of molecular biologists now is to find out one-letter genetic differences (single-nucleotide polymorphisms or SNPS) between different people. Suppose there's a patient who needs examination. Scientists can take a sample of his blood, compare his genetic endowment with the ideal one that's on a chip, see where the trouble is using a particular software, and set it right. Or, by reading the genetic code in advance, they could announce the possible advent of some disease in the near future, thereby preventing it. They could tinker the genes and make unhealthy people healthy. They could handle the genes in such a way that each person's genes could be studied and suitable medicines of the future could be administered. In the future, we can just get ourselves checked to find out what's in store

for us. This could especially be done in case of embryos to advantage.

The other use would be in the field of differences—the moral concern. From what scientists saw, the entire human race is one so far as genetic material is concerned. As Eric Lander, Director, Whitehead-MIT Center for Genome Research, said, the DNA of any two humans is 99.9% identical. In time, scientists hope to tinker them too.

Are we Machines?

The genetic world has opened up new vistas of development and progress for everyone. But as scientists themselves say, to say that genomics is all about pinpointing the gene to be the source of every problem is only a little truth. *Proteomics* is the next frontier which scientists say is the ultimate tool to knowing the secret of life. Research on studying, mapping and analysing the entire human protein structure is already underway. There are at least two million proteins in the human body; scientists are trying to classify them into about 5000 groups for study. In any case, a new world is in the offing, if what we hear is true.

Given credit where it's due, there are sensible questions: are we machines for some chemicals to manufacture and dictate terms? As Eric Lander said, 'Once you start to see human beings as products of manufacture, you cross a line, and you may never be able to return.' There's a second problem. Has the gene intelligence? Is it conscious? This leads to a third question: For all the things that the gene promises, something else needs to be taken into account. And this takes us to India.

Om, the Indian Genome

Like the genome of the scientific world, we have had Om in India. Om is the ultimate basis of everything, said our ancient Indian scientists. Om contains three letters: *akāra*, *ukāra* and *makāra*. Everything has been distilled down to these three letters. How they did it is a story in itself.

There were thousands of scientists in India in ancient times called *ṛṣis* in Sanskrit. And they tread virtually the same path that our

modern-day scientists are treading. Perhaps history is repeating itself. The Indian scientists only went further on and reached a stage which was the culmination of all adventure.

Just as the 19th and 20th century-scientists were mostly busy with stars and planets, the laws of gravitation and motion, the principles of uncertainty and unified field theory, etc, the scientists of India too were initially extremely curious about the external world. It might surprise present-day people, but our ancient scientists knew much about stars and planets. Their methods, however, were different. From crude space shuttles to mental motion—it was a long leap forward. This is how our ancients progressed. Naturally, they did not leave back records of all their earlier exploits with nature. We don't remember which toy we played with on some particular evening when we were babies, do we?

Slowly, like our modern scientists, the ancient Indian scientists turned their eyes nearer to home. The first thing that surprised them was the human body—its functions, the astonishing things inside it, the questions of death, disease and deformity, and so on. It may stump us, but Indian scientists of old knew the technique of conquering old age and death also. The ancients discovered one medicine which could 'conquer' death: that was the *saṃjivinī* plant. And they knew *kāyakalpa*, the art of rejuvenating the body.

The Indian scientists then went further. Body manifests disease, all right. But can the source of disease be elsewhere? They pondered and searched. Was it the heart? No. Was it the blood? No. Was it some tiny thing in the body? No. At last the ancient scientists found a source of illness. ***It was prāṇa.***

We should never confuse *prāṇa* with breathing exercise (*prāṇāyāma*). Says Swami Vivekananda: 'Perhaps some of you have read that in Pranayama, when drawing in the breath, you must fill your whole body with Prana. In the English translations Prana is given as breath, and you are inclined to ask how that is to be done. The fault is with the

translator. Every part of the body can be filled with Prana, this vital force; and when you are able to do that, you can control the whole body. All the sickness and misery felt in the body will be perfectly controlled...' (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. 1, p. 153). Just like genomics is searching for the single-nucleotide polymorphisms or SNPs, our ancient scientists discovered why *prāṇa* should cause disease. Vivekananda says: 'Sometimes in your own body the supply of Prana gravitates more or less to one part; the balance is disturbed, and when the balance of Prana is disturbed, what we call disease is produced. To take away the superfluous Prana, or to supply the Prana that is wanting, will be curing the disease.' But how are we to accomplish that? 'When a man has concentrated his energies, he masters the Prana that is in his body. When a man is meditating, he is also concentrating the Prana' (*Complete Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 155-6).

The skin, the bone, the blood, the cell, the gene—all are dependent entities though they appear to be independent. They aren't conscious, intelligent entities. Something else makes them alive. There is an anecdote in the Upanishads which hints how *prāṇa* is superior to all other organs (see *Praśna Upaniṣad*, 2.1-4). Thus the Indian scientists had discovered *prāṇa* to be the source of life and of diseases.

We know that yogis live long, that they can remain buried for days. These are all not folklore but fact. Knowing for once that it's the vital force which is the root of life, Indian scientists of old developed various sciences—Hathayoga, Yoga, Ayurveda, etc—to make the body strong and agile.

All went well for some time. The ancient Indian scientists were undoubtedly jubilant. But the joy was soon to vanish. Serious questions came up. They observed anomalies: if a father had some ailment, the son or daughter too was having it. How to explain this? Are *all* diseases owing to the disturbance of *prāṇa* alone? Further, how to explain deformity, dementia, blindness, malfunctions, etc in a new-

born? How to explain the incongruity in God's creation where some are born healthy while some others aren't? Swamiji's words are naturally forceful here. He asks: '... why should one suffer more than another? Why such partiality, if it comes from an all-merciful God? ...Why do people starve who never did anything to cause it? Who is responsible?' (*Complete Works*, Vol. 1. p. 320).

It was a baffling situation, but like modern-day researchers, those Indian scientists too were open-minded and rational. But here was a situation where they didn't know what to do: they were being led and coerced to accept a theory which promised to explain all phenomena. It was a strange theory, but there was ample evidence to corroborate its truth. That theory was ***the theory of rebirth or reincarnation***. It was a stunning discovery, about to make everything topsy-turvy. But the scientists were bold. They felt: 'If we don't accept this theory, we can't explain many things like defects and ailments with birth.' They tried their utmost but couldn't ignore the theory.

That was how the scientists were led to the unique world of the mind. Behind the body, behind the *prāṇa*, there was something astounding: that was the mind. The scientists dived deep into the mind and discovered the unconscious. In this unconscious, they found a huge library—a library of universal dimensions. In it were astounding records. These records aren't merely stored information but active synthesizers of life itself. That was how the scientists had discovered the library of life. They soon began to study this vast library. But they were amazed!

It's amazing how what we see, hear, smell, taste and experience are all systematically recorded by the unconscious. It is more amazing how each one of our actions is recorded and its effect produced in time. It's still more amazing how thought can produce the body! Every action we perform and every thought we think is called *karma* and it produces a photo-image in the mind, called impression (*saṃskāra*). These impressions are of

two types: one that produces memory of the past experience and the other which goads us to act. One is called *vāsanā* while the other is called *karmāśaya*. It is the *karmāśaya* born of our past actions (*karma*) that brings us to this earth again and again, makes us live here and suffer. Each action has a reaction and the reaction is produced immediately in this birth or in a future birth. We can't hurt or kill someone and go scot-free. We can't do something wrong and escape. The law may fail to catch us, but our inner library will never fail: the inner law will take its own course. We die and take birth again: this cycle continues till we escape the hold of *karma*. Now this explains heredity: When we are born, we are born with the *karmāśaya* of previous births. *Brahma Sūtras* says: 'On the exhaustion of good work the soul with the residual *karma* descends to this earth' (3.1.8). So to study only this present life and explain everything is like studying a small piece of film and saying that we know the story of the entire movie it concerns.

This library of the unconscious, then, is behind our well-being and diseases, our suffering and happiness, the way we look like, etc. It is this very unconscious that brings hereditary diseases too. How's that? The soul is born to work out its past and to become free; without working out the past, there is no respite. In order to work out the effects of past actions (called *karma*) the soul wishes to have suitable parents and families. Consequently, it imbibes hereditary diseases.

There is another theory along similar lines put up by *Brahma Sūtras*, which has almost a section devoted to a discussion on what happens when we die. According to this work, which is the basis of most Indian philosophies, 'the soul goes out of the body enveloped with subtle parts of the elements (earth, fire, water, air, space) with a view to obtaining a fresh body' (3.1.1). The work quotes an opponent who argues that these elements are available everywhere and so the dying soul need not take them from the previous body. To this, *Brahma Sūtras* says that because *the sense organs*

too are taken with the soul, the organs need a base and so the elements go with them (3.1.3). To this again, the opponents say, 'How can the sense organs go with the soul? We see that the body is burnt to ashes!' The reply comes with scriptural evidence: 'Not so. When the soul departs, the vital force follows: when the vital force departs, all the organs follow.' What we burn is only the external matter. So, as against the genetic theory, our organs, the power behind the eyes, the ears, etc, all go with the soul when we die, to come down once again!

Are we Machines Then?

So everything is pre-destined and we can't change anything at all then? Did the Hindu scientists mean we are helpless machines? Not at all! We have absolute freedom, they said. How? Our freedom is in acting and living in the present: *we can make our future*. Swami Vivekananda says: 'The doctrine of reincarnation asserts the freedom of the soul. ... If I set the wheel in motion, I am responsible for the result. And if I can bring misery, I can also stop it. It necessarily follows that we are free' (*Complete Works*, Vol. 1, p. 320). Every noble action nullifies a hundred bad actions of the past. Thus, in no time we can be free from the effects of evil actions and become perfect. Just like scientists are about to bring about health by tinkering the genes, by tinkering our karma, by undoing what we have done, we can easily lead healthy, happy and peaceful lives.

All this appears like a cock-and-bull story to modern people. 'Prove it,' they say. But it's something like this: if you said a century ago that you would send letters by e-mail and not by post, people around would think that something's seriously wrong with you.

Even all this is not the end: there's something more. The one common element between the modern scientists and that of our ancient Indian masters is this: dissatisfaction. The scientists of old weren't satisfied with anything. 'Go forward' was their only guiding principle. Forward and forward they went,

and one morning, they discovered the Truth behind all truths—the supreme Reality.

How that happened was like this. The question came up: agreed that we undergo rebirth, and so the suffering. But what's it that goes from birth to birth? What's eternal in this fleeting body? It's not simply the mind because the mind has its own limitations. Then? They searched. After superhuman struggle, our scientists had reached the Truth which they called the Self or Atman: it is the Self that dons a mind and a body. That was the culmination of their pursuit. Call it the Self or Truth or Puruṣa, it is the light of this that shines on everything else and makes them function.

The Indian scientists of old had thus discovered three states or dimensions of existence: the physical or gross, the mental or subtle, and the spiritual or subtlest. They found how these were produced from a single source. So they discovered Om. Of the three letters of Om, 'a', stands for the gross universe, or creation; 'u' stands for the subtle universe, or preservation; and 'm' stands for the causal universe, or annihilation. In the *Praśna* (5.2-5) and *Māṇḍūkya* (1-5) *Upaniṣads* there is a serious discussion about all this.

Like the genomists who have deciphered 3.1 billion letters in the genome as being the source of everything, our Indian scientists had distilled everything to Om. Om is the source of everything. By thinking and contemplating on Om, we can be free from all types of diseases: physical, mental and spiritual.

Today's science is in the genome world now. For it to reach the world of Om it needs only a small change: it should give up four letters of 'GENomE', which go to form 'gene'! Disbelief in things which can't be seen by the naked eye, but are true, is in our genes. This's a major disadvantage of the scientific spirit. The day we tinker those genes that limit our vision—like the physicists of late who appear to believe in Hindu cosmology—we reach the Truth. □

IMAGES OF INDIA'S PAST

A Women's Army!

After Maharana Sanga died, his son Vikramaditya (who ruled between 1531-36) sat on the throne of Chitore. This king was a weak man and was given to luxuries. Seizing the opportunity, the Pathan kings of Gujarat and Malwa attacked Chitore. The king lost the battle and ran away. The Pathans started entering the fort. It was usual for Indian women of those days to commit *jouhar*, ie, mass self-immolation, to protect their womanhood. The wife of the coward Vikramaditya was Jawaharbai, a lady of rare qualities. She went about telling the Rajput women, 'In order to protect our purity, we should commit *jouhar*, no doubt. But, since we shall have to die, let's die with sword in hand. Come on, friends, let's fight the enemy and die.' There was a great enthusiasm and hundreds of ladies took to arms. Riding on horseback under Jawaharbai's leadership, this women-army attacked the surprised Pathans. Blood flowed profusely; many Pathans were killed. The women lost, naturally. But it was the Pathans who really lost, because they were fighting inexperienced women. Almost all women laid their lives fighting and the rest committed *jouhar* (cf. *Kalyan*, 'Nari Ank').

Looting India—Clive Fashion

In June 1757, Robert Clive resolved to depose Sirajud-daula, the Nawab of Murshidabad, and replace him by his minister Mir Jafar, who was ready to cheat his master. At this time, Clive devised a notorious trick to be played on a rich banker by name Amirchand, who was also concerned with the plot, but had threatened to divulge it unless his silence was bought by payment of thirty lakhs, or three millions, of rupees subsequently reduced to two millions. After the battle of Plassey Clive deceived the banker by showing him a forged duplicate in which the promise of payment had been deleted. Amirchand at the time naturally was overwhelmed with disappointment, but the story that he lost his reason is untrue. Subsequently Amirchand resumed business with the English, and in his will bequeathed a considerable sum to the Foundling Hospital in London. The secret agreement with Mir Jafar rendered a fight with Sirajud-daula inevitable. Sirajud-daula lost the battle owing to the traitor Mir Jafar and as a reward, the latter was made Nawab. Clive and the other officials concerned obtained large sums for themselves. How much did Clive receive? He received a stupendous sum of £2,34,000 (compare the amount with today's standards!)! The members of his council received £50,000 and £80,000 each! (Cf. Vincent Smith, *The Oxford History of India*, pp. 491-4.)

The First Indian to Visit England

The first Indian to visit England was a Parsi gentleman, who travelled to London in 1703 in order to seek redress from the Court of Directors of the East India Company.

The Story of Anthropology

PROF BUDDHADEB CHAUDHURI

Prof Chaudhuri is Dr Ambedkar Chair Professor in Anthropology, Calcutta University. In this article, after surveying the developments that have taken place in the field of social anthropology, the author highlights the need for a more scientific approach to the study of the temple tradition.

Prelude

Anthropology is the study of human beings, both physical and socio-cultural. While on the one hand it examines the evolution of the human being as well as the distribution and classification of different races in the world, on the other it studies our socio-cultural characteristics and behaviour. Social anthropology is mainly concerned with the present. The place of anthropology in the social sciences is quite distinct. The subject was largely influenced by philosophy and history in the Indian context. Anthropology is one of the few disciplines which is primarily based on empirical studies at the micro level. Its methodology is more suitable for conducting studies among peasants, rural societies and other small groups.

There is a long history of anthropological studies in India. Such studies were current even before anthropology was formally taught in any university. Many self-made scholars initiated studies on different tribal communities, the history and origin of different institutions, and the caste system. These apart, many Britishers during the pre-independence days studied various institutions in order to understand the socio-economic features of their subjects. Thus, though the development of anthropology was linked with colonial interests, nationalist scholars also used it in mobilizing people to fight for independence.

The Background

The history and development of anthro-

pology is intimately connected with colonial rule but it played an unfortunate role in its interests. It was important for the rulers to know their subjects well—the cleavages in society at the levels of caste, religion, language and region—so that a division could be created for effective control and easy rule. But as they came from outside, they had to depend on studies for this knowledge; so they initiated some. There is a very well known work, *Peoples of India* by Risley, a British administrator. While collecting data about brahmins, specific instructions were given to select samples with certain characteristic features. The intention was quite clear: to project the differences amongst the Indian population even with regard to physical features. Though anthropology has played this negative role, it is to be noted that it is not the fault of the discipline but of those who have utilized the knowledge for ulterior motives. As there are cleavages or divisions in society there are cementing factors too, which the discipline can provide. Anthropology can help challenge many myths which promote exploitation and subjugation.

The first anthropology department in India was established at the Calcutta University in 1921. After India's independence, anthropology departments came up in a number of universities. At the same time, there was a radical shift in the focus and interest of anthropological research. In contrast with the earlier period, when anthropologists mostly studied the origin, history, development, and ethnography of human communities, especially

tribal, the post-independence national level planning emphasized rural development and community development projects, which influenced anthropological studies. Due to these national-level influences, there was a radical shift in the trend of anthropological studies positively. Village studies became more popular, and anthropologists began focusing on various problems connected with the agrarian world. They also investigated technological development and change, the possible impact of technological shifts, industrialization, market economy and associated problems, effects and consequences of development programmes on human society, etc. This trend continued in the 1950s and 60s. During this period, a number of western scholars conducted anthropological studies in India, but such studies were mostly made at the individual level. With the introduction of large-scale community development projects, a number of American scholars initiated community impact assessment studies, mostly on Indian villages. Thus three distinct traditions of anthropological studies began to emerge: the first was based on American anthropology, the second, on the British tradition, and the third was derived from the Indian tradition.

Anthropologists generally conducted field research on non-metropolitan areas and generally on rural societies. However, from the 1970s, various problems of urban communities and their development attracted the attention of anthropologists. Some scholars investigated the problems of the urban poor. During this period, anthropologists paid attention to other previously neglected fields of study, like the problems of equity in education, relative illiteracy of females in comparison with the males, etc. Attempts were also made to analyse the issue in the context of existing socio-economic system, gender inequality and status hierarchy. Studies were also made in politics and factionalism, ethnicity, identity, movement and unrest in different parts of India. Besides, with rapid changes in society, certain newer problems like that of the

aged also attracted the attention of anthropologists. The fast socio-political changes in the region stimulated large-scale migrations in different parts of India and many became refugees: this was another field for study. In the context of the general backwardness of certain areas, various developmental programmes were initiated, which have affected people and environment in various ways. In the recent past, a number of studies have been made on indigenous knowledge and wisdom related to health care and many other aspects. The growing environmental degradation, the Patent Act, commercial interest and related problems have been examined as well. Thus anthropological studies have academic interest and also developmental implications.

Anthropology Institutions

Besides universities and colleges, there are many organizations in India for anthropologists. The Anthropological Survey of India is the largest anthropological organization in India with offices all over the country. It is a governmental organization. The Indian Council of Social Science Research is a national autonomous organization that initiates and supports research in all social science disciplines including anthropology. A number of social science research centres are also there in almost all states where anthropologists are working. There are also various national institutes, like the Indian Statistical Institute and the National Institute of Rural Development, where anthropological units are functioning. Additionally, there are certain specialized organizations such as the National Institute of Health and Family Welfare, where medical anthropologists are working. There are some prestigious institutes such as the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies based in Shimla, the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts in Delhi or the Asiatic Society in Calcutta, where anthropologists are doing research.

Anthropologists' View of Religion

Religion is the belief in and the attempt to relate favourably to (a) values thought to have some transcendental importance, and/or (b)

the ultimate power or powers thought to be responsible for the fundamental order of the universe. It is that aspect of culture which is concerned with the sanctifications of beliefs and behaviour patterns. Religious institutions are those that are formally concerned with the determination of the sacred. When religion is thus defined, it is clear that it is vitally necessary for a stable social organization within given groups. A society with no sanctifying agency (with no religion) would have nothing but ordinary folkways or practical demands of the moment as foundation for organizations. These are not sufficient for more than transitory associations. They do not provide an adequate basis for the sustained co-ordinate endeavour that is indispensable for enduring social coherence; common folkways are too easily disregarded. Thus far in history, humankind has been loyal only to those values which are related to the Eternal. It is religion which establishes this relationship and is therefore necessary for social coherence.

In the western analysis of religion, the sacred-profane polarity model has been followed by scholars. Elida (1961) and Durkheim (1961) see sacred as that which is opposed to profane. The sacred and the profane have always been conceived as two distinct classes, as mutually exclusive and contradictory, sometimes as even rivals. Now, can the sacred-profane duality, which has influenced many Indian thinkers also, be used to understanding and analysing Indian religion and society? Perhaps yes, but some studies show a different situation. Mahapatra has observed (1977) how god-king and temple-palace are inseparable. Roy Burman has noted (1974) a difference in the Hindu and Christian concepts of the sacred. In the Hindu tradition, sacred is not external to the secular. Saraswati (1975) has observed that sacred and secular are dialectically, rather than dichotomously, related. To him, the sacred-secular continuum is the empirical reality that can be observed in the organization of sacred tradition. In a sacred place like Banaras, in the organization of

its space, in the performance of rituals, and in the profession of ritual specialists, it is almost impossible to make a clear-cut distinction between the sacred and the secular (1984: 17). In the Hindu tantric tradition, the sacred-profane distinction is completely obliterated at the experimental level. It is not the opposition between the two but their continuum which is more conspicuous. Thus, studying the sacred-profane dichotomy in the Durkheimian sense in the Indian context and the existence of purely secular and purely sacred situations at the empirical level is very interesting.

Anthropological studies in religion consider three components of the organic complex: (a) belief in the supernatural entities, (b) specialists who create such beliefs, and (c) laity who receive it in various forms (Sinha: 1974).

Studies Till Now

In the past, the Hindu sacred texts, having mainly religious and philosophical connotations and often covering the theoretical models of social behaviour based on traditional norms, had very little socio-anthropological importance. Before anthropology was formally taught in the Indian universities, studies in religion had less academic rigour. At that time, religion was studied mainly by travellers, missionaries, and self-made scholars, who either made textual analysis or discussed the diverse religious beliefs and practices and peculiar customs on the basis of their empirical data (Dubois: 1928). Gradually, elaborate ethnographic study was made on different tribal communities (Elwin: 1955; Roy: 1912, 1928). Often attempts were made to correlate the religious beliefs and practices with social life (Bodding: 1925, 1927, 1940). Diffusion study (Bose: 1927; Chattopadhyay: 1935; Das: 1927; Hutton: 1961) and study on acculturation were also made, of which Roy's study on changing Oraon religion (1928) and Bose's article on 'Hindu Method of Tribal Absorption' (1941) are worth mentioning. Majumdar's study on the Ho (1950), where he develops the concept of Bonganism has definite social-anthropological interest. However,

it is observed that as the anthropologists of the early phase were primarily interested in aboriginal studies, the study on religion of tribal communities was more popular. About studies in religion in the context of Indian villages, the classic book *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India* (1952) by Srinivas needs special mention, in which he develops the theory of Sanskritization to explain the process of change in villages and linked rituals to the major units in the social structure. Studies in the correlation of religion with social structure were also made (Beteille: 1964; Gough: 1959; Harper: 1967). Besides these, the following two volumes on religion are of great interest from the social-anthropological point of view. *Aspects of Religion in Indian Society* edited by Vidyarthi (1962) covers tribal and rural religion, changes in religion and analysis of certain complex beliefs of the tribals and rural people of India. In *Religion in South Asia* edited by Harper (1964), the various approaches to the anthropological study of religion were discussed. *Traditional India: Structure and Change* (1958) edited by Singer, has quite a few articles which have some relevance to the study of religion. Redfield's ideas on social organization of tradition were utilized by Singer and Marriott in the study of Madras city and U.P. villages respectively. Marriott also developed the concept of 'parochialization and universalization' (1955). Among the Indian scholars, the most notable study on religion in the framework of Redfield's and Singer's concept was made by Vidyarthi, who elaborately studied the Hindu sacred city of Gaya (1961). Later, Vidyarthi initiated the study on the sacred complexes of different places in India and a seminar was held in Ranchi in 1973. Nirmal Kumar Bose showed keen interest in studying some untouched or unconventional fields in anthropological research. He encouraged and stimulated studies on sacred areas, *mathas*, temples, etc, and this idea was taken up and elaborated by Sinha and Saraswati (1978), by Sinha in his study of Kalighat temple (1972), and by Saraswati (1975, 1984) in the study on

monks, *mathas*, *akhadas*, various sects, pundits, etc in the sacred city of Kashi. Thus temple anthropology gradually gained momentum.

Anthropological Study of Temples

Sociological-anthropological studies on temples are relatively few as compared to historical and architectural studies. Archaeologists have studied the structural aspects of different temples and quite a few elaborate reports are available on historical and mythological aspects. However, with the exception of Ghurye (1965), who showed some relation between modes of worship and the development of temple structure, most studies have little sociological-anthropological interest.

Bose, Patnaik and Ray (1958) studied the Lingaraja temple in Orissa, especially its organization of services, and discussed daily services, annual celebrations, holy men, and emoluments. They say that even a sudra performs certain duties like decorating the image, though the major functions like worshipping the deity, cooking the sacred offerings, etc, are done by brahmins. Certain non-brahmin castes like potters, washermen, barbers, etc perform various non-priestly functions. Bhowmick (1960) studied four temples in the Midnapur district of West Bengal, particularly the iconography, caste participation and service pattern, modes of offerings and purpose of worship. In two temples, the priests belonged to low social status—Manji-fisherman and Lodha. Saraswati (1963) studied the festivals and management of the Shantadurga temple in Goa. He has observed that temples symbolized family lineage, vitalized kinship bonds, and united its members to live under a common roof. He further observed that musicians had a special role to play in temple activities, and temples proved to be helpful in producing doyens of instrumental as well as vocal music. Ray's study (1969) is, in fact, a study in historical sociology of the Pashupatinath temple, Nepal. Her paper tries to find out the uniqueness of the temple by analysing available facts from history, archaeology and contemporary socio-religious data. She observes that this temple is

still under the control of the Bhattaraka brahmins who migrated from south India and they still marry within the group. The temple has still maintained a relatively purer *smārta-purāṇic* brahminical outlook and stands apart from the mainstream of Nepalese life which is pervaded, so far as their socio-religious observances are concerned, by tantric rites and practices. Goswami and Morab (1970) discuss their approach to the study on temples in Mysore after reviewing available trends. In another work (1970a), they have studied the nature of change in the occupation of the priestly caste, the Dikshits of south India. They observe that the tendency to adopt other occupations was largely evident in the present generation. The shift was usually towards white-collar jobs. They followed only those occupations which did not affect their ritual status. The reasons of mobility were, no change in the scale of pay in temple services, absence of land and other grants, few new temples built, and better educational facilities which increased the possibility of securing new types of jobs.

Freeman's study (1971), though not directly concerned with a temple, is on the occupational changes of the temple servants, the Mallia caste of Orissa, who are traditionally associated with the Kapileshwara temple. Growing population of this community has far exceeded the capacity of the Kapileshwara temple to pay even the minimum wages, resulting in occupational mobility and consequent migration. Even now, the Mallia community has a subtle economic and sentimental hold on the temple, and many joint families allocate one man, usually an elderly person or an uneducated young man, to perform temple duties. Sinha's (1972) brief but interesting study on the famous Kalighat temple, mentioned earlier, covers the history and legends, secular invasion, the *sevāyats* of the temple and their changes in occupation, organizational patterns, the pilgrims and their purpose of visit, and the spread of the cult. He has observed that the rise in the number of pilgrims may be directly proportional to the growth of

the city's population and increasing travel facilities. Mahapatra (1973) has observed that in Orissa, in the two most important temples and in a few minor ones, the temple services are carried out by engaging almost all the local functional castes. Legends tell that the gods themselves have special personal relationships with the Hindu kings and the brahmin priests; thereby they have reinforced the division of labour, social and ritual differentiation and hierarchy in the caste system of the region, enabling all castes to participate in temple functions in diverse ways. Jha says about Chattisgarh temples that the sacred complexes are in themselves an intricate combination of the great and little tradition. Jha also conducted an interesting study on the famous Pashupatinath temple and organized sessions in the World Anthropological Congress in Vancouver, Zagreb and Mexico related to pilgrimage, temple, etc. Narayan (1974) studied the pilgrims of Banaras and noted that considerable changes have taken place in their content and attitude towards pilgrimage, and pilgrims do not always take the help of specialists in rituals. Chakraborty (1974) studied the pilgrims of the Tarakeshwar (West Bengal) temple and observed composition as well as behavioural differences among them. M. Mahapatra (1974) studied the sacred geography of Guptakashi (Bhubaneswar) following the concepts of Vidyarthi and studied a number of temples, tanks, rivers, altars, caste associations, youth clubs and the residential areas of the priests. B.N. Sahay (1974) discussed the sacred geography of Kashi. He says that holy places may be classified according to the sect, physical nature of the shrine, temple architecture, etc. He also observed changes in the sacred geography effected due to secular reasons. He further noted a decline in the sacred tradition of this ancient city. K.N. Sahay (1974) made a preliminary study on Rameshwaram and Tirupati shrines of south India. Upadhyay (1974) studied Dwaraka, its historical background, geography, the rituals performed, and the sacred complex. He tried to compare

and develop the sacred complex concept put forward by Vidyarthi. Preston (1980) conducted a study on the Handi temple of Cuttack, Orissa. He was primarily interested in studying religion in a changing society. Morab (1980) examined the different dimensions of Chamundeshwari temple (Karnataka) as a pilgrim centre. He and Goswami (1989) also studied the tribes and castes as functionaries in the temples of Karnataka. Vishwanath (1985) studied a Shiva temple in Gujarat and examined the consequences as the temple was likely to be submerged due to the construction of the Narmada dam. Bapat (1990) studied the rehabilitation programme of the Devadasis in south India. Naidu (1994) conducted a study on the continuity and change among the temple priests of Tirumala temple.

Besides these studies, the study of Vidyarthi on the temple of Gaya (1961) and the different concepts put forward by him give a new dimension to the study of temples and has undoubtedly influenced a larger number of scholars. Bose also influenced a number of scholars by his approach to studying holy places, temples, etc in the perspective of studying Indian civilization. Besides, the concepts put forward by Redfield, Singer and Marriott in studying the Indian civilization were found to be useful analytical concepts and have influenced a number of scholars.

Some of these studies, and my own study on community worship in an urban context, clearly indicate that temples and other religious institutions perform a variety of secular functions, and they depend on various secular means for their functioning. The members of other religions are not sometimes allowed to enter some sacred places, and through this and other boundary-maintaining mechanisms, sacred places offer a platform for the identification of Hindus and out of it emerges some sort of integration cutting across narrow regional boundaries. But one of the most important social functions that temples and other

sacred places perform, and is mostly overlooked in different earlier studies, is that they help to perpetuate and reinforce the traditional norms, customs and practices. Previously, people belonging to the higher castes alone were allowed to enter temples. Though it has been abolished by law, there are some temples where priests are still reluctant to serve the lower castes, and thus social hierarchy is perpetuated and reinforced through the functioning of these temples. The Devadasi system present in a few temples of south India even today has some socio-religious approval. Even now, after the formation of a temple committee to look after the activities of temples in many areas, the exercise and control of power have been legally approved without affecting much of the traditional pattern if these committees are still dominated by brahmin priests. The ownership of vast pieces of land (*devottar*) and other properties may perpetuate and reinforce the traditional feudal relations and exploitation. Unfortunately most of the anthropological studies on religion as perspectives of Indian civilization have missed some of the realities of the Indian society or perhaps they were not interested to examine them from that perspective.

The number of community festivals has increased considerably in the recent past. The number of visitors even in the urban temples is increasing. Similarly, the increase in community worships may articulate with various secular needs including factionalism and politics. The functioning of the religious organizations in the context of various secular needs has not been seriously examined or studied so far. In the present context of political, socio-economic and cultural transformation, it is very interesting to study how religion operates in a changing society and the nature of secular needs it performs, and a study on it will clearly indicate a continuity between sacred and secular interests. □

Libraries Till Now: A Survey

D. N. NAGARAJA RAO & J. S. SAINATH

(continued from the previous issue)

Library Development in India

In India, royal patronage acted as a great incentive for the production of a vast body of literature and for the steady growth of all the languages and their scripts. Thus we find Buddhist writers and copyists receiving patronage from Kanishka, and the emergence of the Hindu renaissance during the golden age of the Guptas. In the South also we find the Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas, Pallavas, Cholas, Hoysalas, Vijayanagar kings, Nayakas and Reddis, all patronizing the learned and helping the production of good literature. Monks and priests attached to the monasteries of the different denominations—Hindu, Buddhist or Jain—and their disciples worked as copyists or scribes. Thus, collections of manuscripts began to be formed. Usually these were attached to the *mathas*, *viharas*, *ghatikasthanas*, *upasrayas*, palaces of kings and mansions of noblemen. Occasionally, wealthy and scholarly individuals made such collections. The bigger collections later came to be known as Bharati Bhandagaras or Saraswati Bhandagaras.

Libraries in Ancient India

Libraries in ancient India may be grouped broadly into three categories: (i) collections at royal courts, (ii) collections at learning centres, and (iii) collections at religious centres.

Collections at Royal Courts: Noted instances of royal patronage are those of Harsha, Vikramaditya, and Bhoja. The library of Raja Bhoja (1018-60) at Dhar was famous in its time. We have references to the library of the Chalukya king, Vishaladeva, which was known as Bharati Bhandagara. A manuscript

of the *Ramayana* from this library is in the library of the University of Bonn (Germany).

Kashmir: From ancient times Kashmir was a seat of learning. The Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang worked there for two years. There is evidence about Sri Ramanuja going to this Saraswati Bhandagara for a manuscript when he was preparing his commentary on the *Brahma Sutras*. Another instance of significance is that Hemachandra, while preparing his grammar, refers to eight older grammars which were available in this library.

Nepal: The oldest royal libraries, even now in existence, is the Durbar Library of Nepal. As Professor Bendall states, as in antiquity so in contents, it has 'been surpassed by no Sanskrit library known to exist.'

Bikaner: Another important court library of the medieval period was the one of the former princely state of Bikaner, which was founded by Maharaja Anup Singhji who ruled there from 1669 to 1698. The collection consisted of Sanskrit and Rajasthani manuscripts on a variety of subjects.

Tanjore: The only manuscript library which has come down to us unharmed and un mutilated is the one established in the 16th century in Tanjore. It is stated to be a storehouse of knowledge and one of the biggest oriental manuscript libraries in the world. The Saraswati Mahal Library was built up between 1532-1673. The credit of its building goes to Raja Sarfoji, who enriched the collection by rare printed books in English, French, Greek, Latin, etc, dealing with a variety of subjects. The total collection exceeds 40,000 manuscripts. *Anandakandam*, a rare Sanskrit treatise on medicine and alchemy preserved

here, deals with atomic physics. The *Geeta Govinda* of Jayadeva Kavi, with all *abhinaya mudras* illustrated, is another rare work preserved here.

Bijapur: The Adilshahi Library at Bijapur was famous for its catholic collections. The *madrassa* of Muhammad Gawan at Bidar established in 1482 had an excellent collection of 3000 manuscripts.

Mysore: The Oriental Research Institute (ORI) is one of the oldest institutes which was established in 1891 in Mysore city as 'Government Oriental Library' by Sri Chamaraja Wodeyar, the then Maharaja. The University of Mysore was established in 1916 and the library became an integral part of the university.

Collections at Learning Centres: In ancient and medieval India, besides the libraries of the royal courts, there were libraries attached to centres of learning where higher education was imparted. Amongst such centres, Takshashila, Nalanda, Vikramashila, Odantapuri, Somanpuri (North Bengal), Varendra (North Bengal), Mithila (Bihar), Vallabhi (Saurashtra), etc are some of the prominent centres.

Takshashila: Takshashila, or Taxila as it is more familiarly known, is the oldest amongst those known to us so far. Its fame as a university centre is referred to in the Buddhist *Jatakas*. There are references to some of its distinguished students, such as Panini, the famous grammarian, Chanakya or Kautilya, the famous minister of Chandra Gupta Maurya, and Jivaka, the famous physician of his time. The last reference indicates that courses pursued here were varied.

Nalanda: Nalanda was another university centre famed far and wide. Before the Christian era, it was a religious centre where Buddhist and Jain luminaries met and discussed their practices and problems. The university came to be founded later. It was soon to suffer at the hands of the Huns, but recovered its great glory and flourished till 1205 AD, drawing learned scholars from all parts of India as

well as from China, Tibet and other neighbouring countries.

Hiuen Tsang, who visited this university in the 7th century AD, has left an interesting account of this centre but the library is described more fully in Tibetan sources. The library complex was styled as 'Dharmaganj' and comprised three grand buildings called Ratnasagar, Ratnadadhi and Ratnaganjaka. Ratnadadhi was a nine-storey building. The library had a large collection of manuscripts and scholars from abroad came there to copy them and take the copies to their countries. While returning to China Hiuen Tsang carried a cartload of manuscripts copied from the works in the Nalanda library. Another Chinese traveller, Itsing, stayed at Nalanda from 675 to 685 AD, got 400 Sanskrit works running into 5 lakhs of verses copied out, and carried them to China. The Gupta emperors patronized the university.

Vikramashila: Vikramashila was another famous seat of learning near Nalanda, founded in the 8th century AD by Dharmapala. It had cultural contacts with Tibet and specialized in the study of tantra. Scholars from Tibet were attracted to it and they wrote works in Sanskrit and translated some of them into Tibetan. Tibetan sources indicate the existence of a library attached to the university. This library is also referred to in a Persian source, *Tabaqat-e-Nasiri*, as containing a 'great number of books on the religion of the Hindus.'

Odantapuri: This is another centre of learning which served as a model for the first Tibetan monastery built in 749 AD; there are evidences that Pala kings took interest in the development of this university and endowed a library of Buddhist and brahminical works.

Vallabhi: An important centre of learning, specializing in Hinayana Buddhism, flourished at Vallabhi in western India on the coast of Saurashtra. It was the capital of the Maitraka kings from 480 to 775 AD. These rulers gave handsome grants for the maintenance of the university and the establishment of the libraries attached to it. According to the

Kathasaritsagara, some preferred to go to the university at Vallabhi rather than the universities at Nalanda or Varanasi. Hiuen Tsang during his travels visited Vallabhi.

Nagai (Nagavi): In the South, interesting details are available of a library attached to a *ghatikashala*, an educational institution, at Nagai. It is an example of an institutional library of the period and the inscription which describes it is dated 1092 AD. Six librarians looked after the library, whose duties included guidance of students besides preservation and processing of materials.

Karnataka: Libraries attached to universities and centres of learning have flourished by patronage of Kadamba, Rashtrakuta, Chalukya and Hoysala kings. They also had built up valuable private libraries. Epigraphic evidences are available to show that universities prospered at Banavasi, Malakheda, Kalyana, Talagunda, Pavattage, Nagavi, Balligave, Kubtur and Aihole. Documents available indicate that lands were distributed for maintenance of the centres, professors and librarians. In 1050 AD, King Ayyarasa of Kollur donated 750 acres of land to the local university for maintenance of students, professors and librarians.

Collections at Religious Centres: With the advent of Jainism, there was a spurt of religious writing and scriptural reproductions, with the result that collections of Jain manuscripts began to multiply in the form of Jain *bhandars* from the fifth century onwards. Jain monks not only wrote but also preached to the laity the importance of reproducing scriptural manuscripts and earning merit (*punya*). They also stressed daily reading as one of the duties of the layman, leading to their collection in 'scripture storehouses' (*shastra bhandars*) or 'book stores' (*grantha bhandars*). The manuscripts were written on paper made of the bark of a special tree (*bhurja patra*), palm leaves, cloth or paper, and each was placed between two wooden boards of the size of the manuscript. The management of the *bhandars* was in the charge of religious personnel.

Among the *bhandars*, those at Jaisalmer and Jaipur in Rajasthan, at Khambhat in Gujarat, at Arrah and Patna in Bihar, at Delhi and Agra, and at Mudbidre in south India are famous. They contain an immense wealth of material, both quantitatively and qualitatively. In recent years, their contents, closely preserved till now, are being made available to scholars the world over. Special mention of Karnataka has to be made in this connection. Sringeri, Melkote and Udupi in Karnataka were chosen as their headquarters by the three great acharyas, viz Shankara, Ramanuja and Madhva, respectively. Basava Kalyana is identified with Basaveshwara. Karkala and Mudbidre are important Jain centres. At all these places excellent manuscript libraries have been in existence right from the days of the respective leaders.

Temple Libraries

In the literary field as well as in other fields, south India has been one of the most dynamic historical regions of the past; from the earliest times it has conserved the fundamental unity of Indian culture, producing innumerable centres of learning. All these centres, attached to Buddhist *viharas*, Jain *pallis* and Hindu *mathas*, played an important role in propagating knowledge and culture. Nilkantha Sastri mentions in his *History of India* that all these institutions had their 'libraries of books in all branches of learning which were being copied from time to time.'⁸ It is, however, from the 10th century onwards that the Hindu *mathas* or temple colleges became the chief centres of higher education. In respect of magnitude as well as the range of subjects dealt with, Hultzsch writes in his *Reports on Sanskrit Manuscripts in Southern India, 1905*: 'The Tanjore library is probably second to none among Oriental libraries in India.'⁹ In the Persian work, *Tarikh-e-Firishta*, it is recorded

8. Quoted in Bimal Kumar Dutta, *Libraries and Librarianship of Ancient and Medieval India* (Delhi: Atmaram & Sons, 1970), p. 41. [Hereafter, B.K. Dutta.]

that Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlak found a valuable collection of 1300 ancient Hindu works in the Jwalamukhi temple at Nagarkot (north India). Firoz Shah invited learned Hindus and arranged for some of the books to be translated into Persian language.

Birth of Modern Library Movement in India

The beginning of the modern library movement in India can be traced to the first half of the 19th century when, with the active support of the Europeans, public libraries were established in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. The year 1808 is significant for the history of Indian public libraries because the Bombay Government (now Maharashtra) initiated a proposal to register libraries that would receive free copies of books published from the 'Funds for the Encouragement of Literature.'

The Calcutta public library owes its origin to J.H. Stocqueler, the editor of *Englishman*. Being encouraged by the success of the Bombay Public Library, Stockqueler took great initiative in framing a project for the Calcutta Public Library. The citizens of Calcutta assembled in the Town Hall on 31 October 1835 and passed a resolution to establish a public library for Calcutta. Thus the nucleus of the library was formed by a collection Rs. 45,000 as donations from the proprietors as well as private persons and by shifting a collection of 4,675 volumes of the Fort William College to Dr F.P. Strong's residence in 1836. The library was made open to public on 21 March 1836. In 1841 the library was temporarily shifted to Fort William, but it was finally housed on the first floor of Metcalfe Hall on payment of a sum of Rs. 1,64,000 in 1844.

The National Library of India: The National Library of India was established as the Imperial Library in 1903 in Calcutta. It was given its present name by the Imperial Library (Change of Name) Act passed by India's Constituent Assembly 1919, when it moved to its

30-acre campus at Belvedere in south Calcutta. When the Imperial Library was founded by Lord Curzon, then Viceroy and Governor-General of India, it took over the holdings of the Calcutta Public Library and the Imperial Secretariat Library (1891). The holdings of the National Library (1984) were in the vicinity of 2.4 million volumes. Among its rare items are about 2,000 books in European languages published between the 15th and 18th centuries and another 3,000 rare titles published in India. The library receives about 20,000 books annually under the Delivery of Books Act and purchases about 9,000 books each year. It subscribes to about 800 foreign periodicals. The library reading-rooms have 500 seats for its average 1,000 daily readers. The library staff is about 800, more than 200 being professional librarians holding degrees or diplomas in library science.

Universities: There are 237 universities in the country, including 39 deemed universities and institutions of national importance. The total number of colleges is 9,703 with nearly 6.75 million students and 0.32 million teachers at the end of the year 1997. The University Grants Commission (UGC) has approved 119 autonomous colleges. Sri C.D. Deshmukh, the first chairman of the UGC, gave a new direction and impetus to the development of university libraries and their librarians in India. Prestigious institutions like the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research are worth mentioning here which have very good libraries and information centres.

INFLIBNET

The Information and Library Network (funded by UGC) has been working towards resource sharing among academic and research libraries. To achieve this objective, different union databases and accessible onlines have been created using the World Wide Web (WWW) have been created. Alternatively, efforts are also being made to provide offline access using electronic mail. During this year 18 more university libraries have been funded, raising the total number to 123 university li-

braries. A new software called 'SOUL' has been developed, which is an integrated software package developed to work in Windows NT environment so that central libraries, departmental libraries and the databases kept at other universities and INFLIBNET Hub can be used simultaneously. The INFLIBNET databases are available online for access on the Internet at <http://202.144.20.250>.

Apart from all these there are other services: The public libraries in India, thanks to Dr S.R. Ranganathan's tireless services; 173 special libraries helping scientists and technologists; and National Council Libraries like the Indian Council for Social Research (ICSSR), Indian Council for Historical Research (ICHR), Indian Council for Philosophical Research (ICPR), etc.

Impact of Computer Technology

The depth and breadth of impact of digital computers on society in general and the information profession in particular have been stupendous.

Prof A. Neelameghan says: 'Information and communication technologies have taken a quantum jump as it were, during the last couple of decades. ... The national task force on Information Technology and Software Development, the Information Technology Bill (1999), attempt to rationalize and expand the telecom sector, the establishment of various network facilities (ERNET, NICNET...INFLIBNET) and the rapidly expanding access to and use of the Internet in the country, are just a few of the noteworthy developments.'¹⁰

Dr Abhijit Lahiri, Adviser, NISSAT, cautions the present-day library and information professionals by his wake-up call: 'Most of conventional libraries are ill equipped to service the ever-growing demand of information-user community. The librarians are bound by their archaic rules, which have been designed

on a platform of mistrust and suspicion. ... Therefore there is a felt need in the market for new breeds of information scientists who are not tied down to rules bound by institutional systems and, hence, are free to act.'

'What really has happened?' he asks and answers that in recent years, the situation has undergone a sea change with the advent of: (a) the Internet; (b) intelligent gateways to aid searching online systems; (c) databases on CDs in stand-alone mode or on networks, which the end-users can play with sophisticated artificial intelligence aid; (d) user-friendly software to plug and run; and (e) open Public Access Catalogue on campus, and so on.¹¹

Alas, the impact of technological innovations have nearly dehumanized the library/information centres. Having worked as a librarian and library educator for over 50 years, F.W. Lancaster laments: 'I am convinced not only that we are losing that knowledge base; worse, we are losing the ethic of public service. For example, the European Commission report lists barriers to the enhancement of public libraries: lack of information technology skills, insufficient training, uncertainty about strategy and choice of solutions, internal resistance to information technology products, general fear of change and lack of managerial skill, together with an environment of bureaucracy and static culture.' Roy Tennant identifies nine 'skills for the new millennium'—skills that, the author maintains, are needed to 'create and manage digital library collections and services.'¹² The skills are, imaging technologies, optical character recognition, mark-up languages, cataloguing and metadata, indexing and database technology, user interface design programming, Web technology and project management. But what about the knowledge of users, of user

10. A. Neelameghan, 'A National Information Network Policy and Governance' in *CALIBER- 2000* (Ahmedabad: INFLIBNET Centre, 2000), p. 4.3.

11. Abhijit Lahiri, 'Opportunities Bountiful' in *Information Today & Tomorrow*, Oct-Dec 1999, p. 18 (4).

12. See *Library Journal*, 15 September 1999, p. 9.

needs and behaviour, of interpersonal skills, of the ethics of public service?

Not only have many librarians fallen in love with the technology itself but also more of their time is spent in learning new technologies, updating their technological knowledge and skills, and making decisions relating in some way to technological change. All this takes them away from direct interaction with users and put more of the public contact on the shoulders of support staff. Technology permeates and dominates the curriculum now. How much of our curricula today deal with more human concerns? How much with professional ethics? How much with the service ideal? But is technology to be blamed?

At a conference in Illinois in 1979, the late, great Derek de Solla Price presented a paper entitled 'Happiness Is a Warm Librarian.' He meant that no amount of automation could substitute for direct face-to-face assistance from a knowledgeable and caring professional. Lancaster suggests that technology alone will not improve the perceived value of our services to users. We need to recognize that the ethic of public service should be at the centre of our professional education; we need more warm librarians.

The Future

Most library experts believe that in the long run libraries will not decrease in importance in the age of technology. In fact, most conclude that libraries will become more vital than ever. David V. Loerstscher, professor in the School Library Credential Program at San Jose State University, USA, and author of *Reinvent Your School's Library In the Age of Technology*, believes that technology simply means libraries have new paths to follow. While technology may not mean an end for libraries, it will require change. Libraries that are able and willing to change may find this millennium one of benefits as well as challenges.

Technology has also meant changes to

the librarian's traditional role as a provider or facilitator of information. For libraries, technology has also often meant hiring additional help. Advanced technology training is also making librarians more valuable, and some libraries have to deal with recruitment and retainment problems they have never faced before. 'Institutionally, libraries are facing some challenges in terms of attracting and retaining qualified technology people,' says Theobald. He has been involved in video-conferencing projects in California public libraries for several years now and sees a trend towards increased use of this tool.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the computer will cause a big challenge for the libraries all over the world. The problems of the librarians are well known to every management, government or private sector. Libraries do not yield immediate, rather, direct profits. This is why authorities are reluctant to invest for library requirements. There is also not much cooperation among libraries on the one hand and between the government-funding agencies and the libraries on the other. To a certain extent librarians also are responsible for the current state of low affairs. There are still many libraries not even having computers. There is not even a single library network in India which is fully functional. However, in the decades to come, IT is going to play a dominant role for achieving speedy progress and it will be inevitable to keep pace with the trends.

In today's economy, as Peter Drucker says, the most important resource is no longer labour, capital or land; it is knowledge. Libraries over the ages have accepted the changes and challenges of the society and tried to meet the complex needs of the user community. India is catching up with this trend and hopes to contribute its mite in promoting and extending the boundaries of knowledge. □

Journey on the Highest Road of the World

COL KULDIP CHAND KOHLI

Here is an absorbing travelogue. On the occasion of Guru Nanak's birth anniversary, which falls on the 11th of this month, Col K.C. Kohli (Retd) takes us on a trip to one of the remotest Gurudwaras in the world. Gurudwara Pathar Sahib is less known, but a vitally important one for the Sikhs.

It was 1993. After 18 years I made a second trip to Gurudwara Pathar Sahib, a rather unknown Sikh shrine, to the west of Leh. I took a different route from the usual Srinagar-Kargil-Leh route. This road connects Manali with Leh, a distance of 476 km, through some of the wildest and desolate terrain. It crosses four high passes and is supposed to be the highest stretch of road in the world. Luckily I got company of six German tourists who had also planned to visit Leh via this route. From Delhi we reached Manali from where this high-altitude road begins. It took us three nights of camping en route and four days in a tourist coach to reach Leh. Surprisingly, during summer there is a regular bus service from Delhi to Leh, which also takes four days to cover the distance.

After a 52-km-long steep climb on a winding road from Manali, we reached Rohtang (12,854 feet), the first of the four high passes. It is the source of the River Beas, which flows down from a small spring called Beas Kund. Rohtang is in the inner Himalayan range, separating Beas and Chenab valleys. A steep descent on the other side for 20 km brings us to the River Chandra, one of the two branches of Chandrabhaga. Chandra joins the other branch Bhaga at Tandi to form Chandrabhaga or Chenab. The Lahaul valley, home of the rivers Chandra and Chenab, is a fertile land dotted by prosperous villages, which are

surrounded by rich green fields. The main crops on which their economy is based are potatoes, peas and hops, the last used in breweries. The valley has the distinction of supplying quality seed potato all over India. It is one of the regions of India with a high per capita income.



A peculiar building at Gondhla

We reached Gondhla. At Gondhla, we saw an old structure, tall, square and peculiar-looking. For the safety of the occupants and to keep intruders out, the building has no entrance door at all. From a large window on the first floor a ladder is lowered to the ground for entering and getting out. At night, or whenever needed, the ladder is pulled up leaving no way to enter the house.

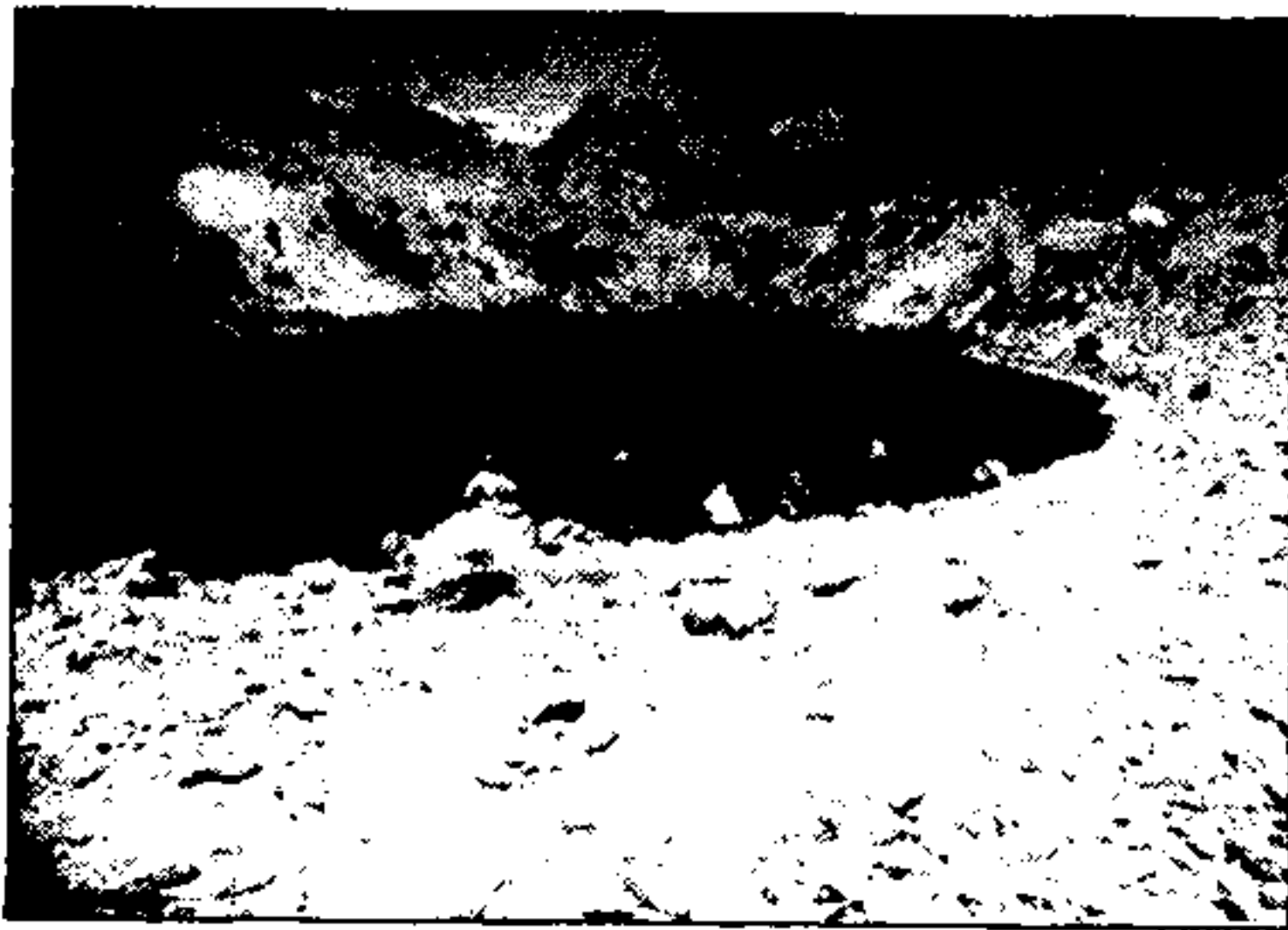
After camping for the night in an apple-apricot orchard in this beautiful valley, we again took to the road next day. The road climbs along the River Bhaga towards Baralacha Pass and is blocked at places by flocks of sheep. On the way we passed through Keylong, the capital of Lahaul. All along the route from Keylong to Leh the region is dotted with Buddhist monasteries of various denominations. We had the occasion of seeing three of these—Shashur, Gaimoor and Meeru—in detail. They were perched on hilltops and involved tough climbs.

As we followed Bhaga upstream we reached Dareha, which is a caravan crossroads and a trekking centre for Zaskar valley,



The Shashur Monastery

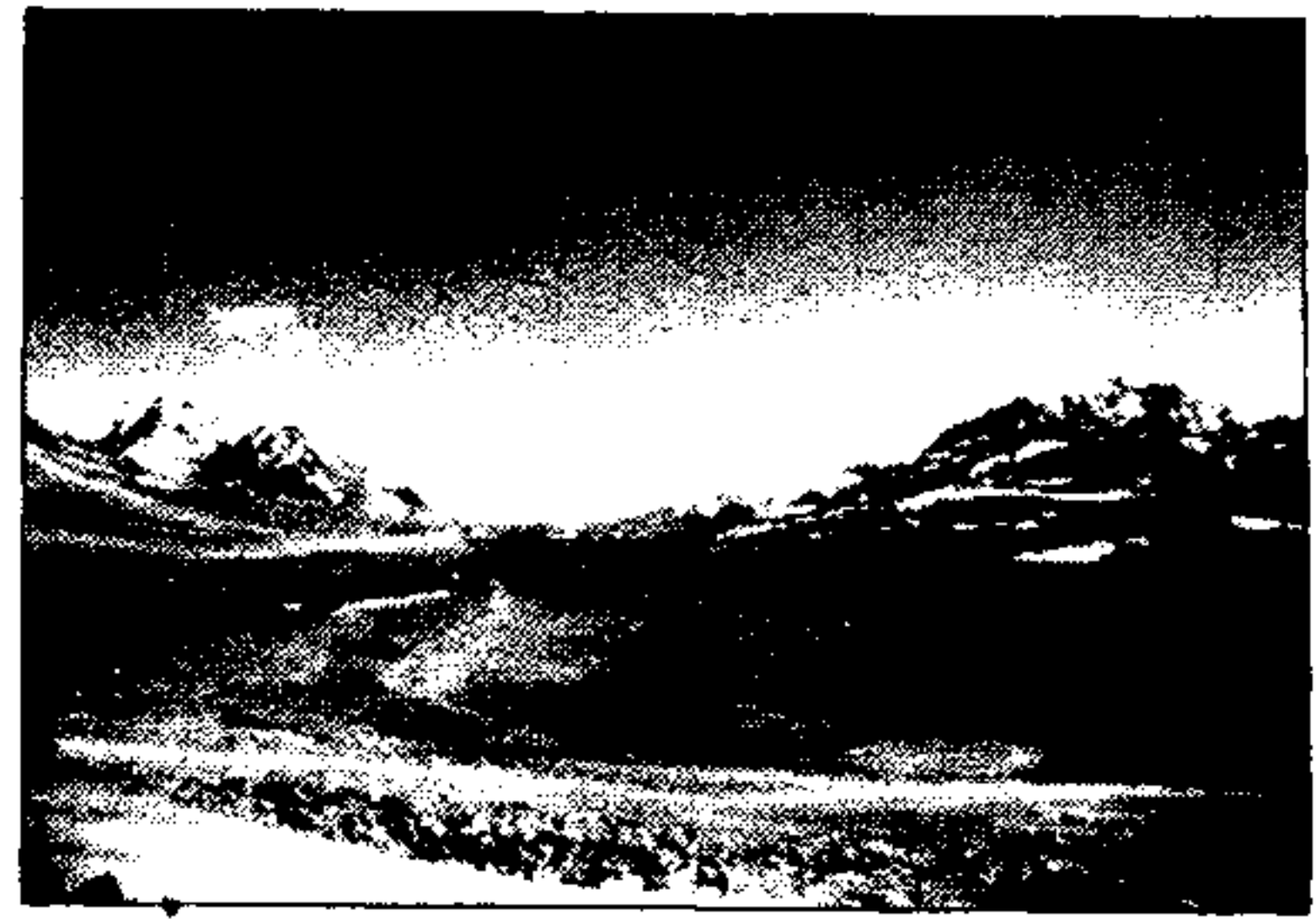
Baralacha Pass and Chandertal Lake. Here two tributaries, Tsarap and Junkar, meet the River Bhaga from east and west. As we keep climbing, the tall trees give place to smaller ones—stunted junipers and shrubs—till the trees disappear altogether at Patseo. Here on the roadside one can see a dilapidated road sign proclaiming, 'You have seen the tree,' a prelude to a terrain mercilessly baked dry by the sun. Short of Patseo is the beautiful jewel



Deepak Lake

of a lake called Deepak Lake set amidst picturesque and enchanting surroundings, where we enjoyed our lunch.

Ten km beyond Patseo (13,850 feet) are some terraced grasslands with a musical sing-song name, Zingzingbar Pastures. Beyond that, short of the Baralacha Pass is Suraj Tal, the source of the River Bhaga. Baralacha Pass is the second pass after Rohtang, at a height of more than 16,000 feet. This pass is not a narrow profile in a high mountain range as one would imagine. It is a high, flat and broad open area about half a kilometre on all sides, with a primitive shrine in the centre by the roadside. From its slopes four streams—Chandra, Lingti, Bhaga and Yonam—originate and flow in four different directions. Here onwards the

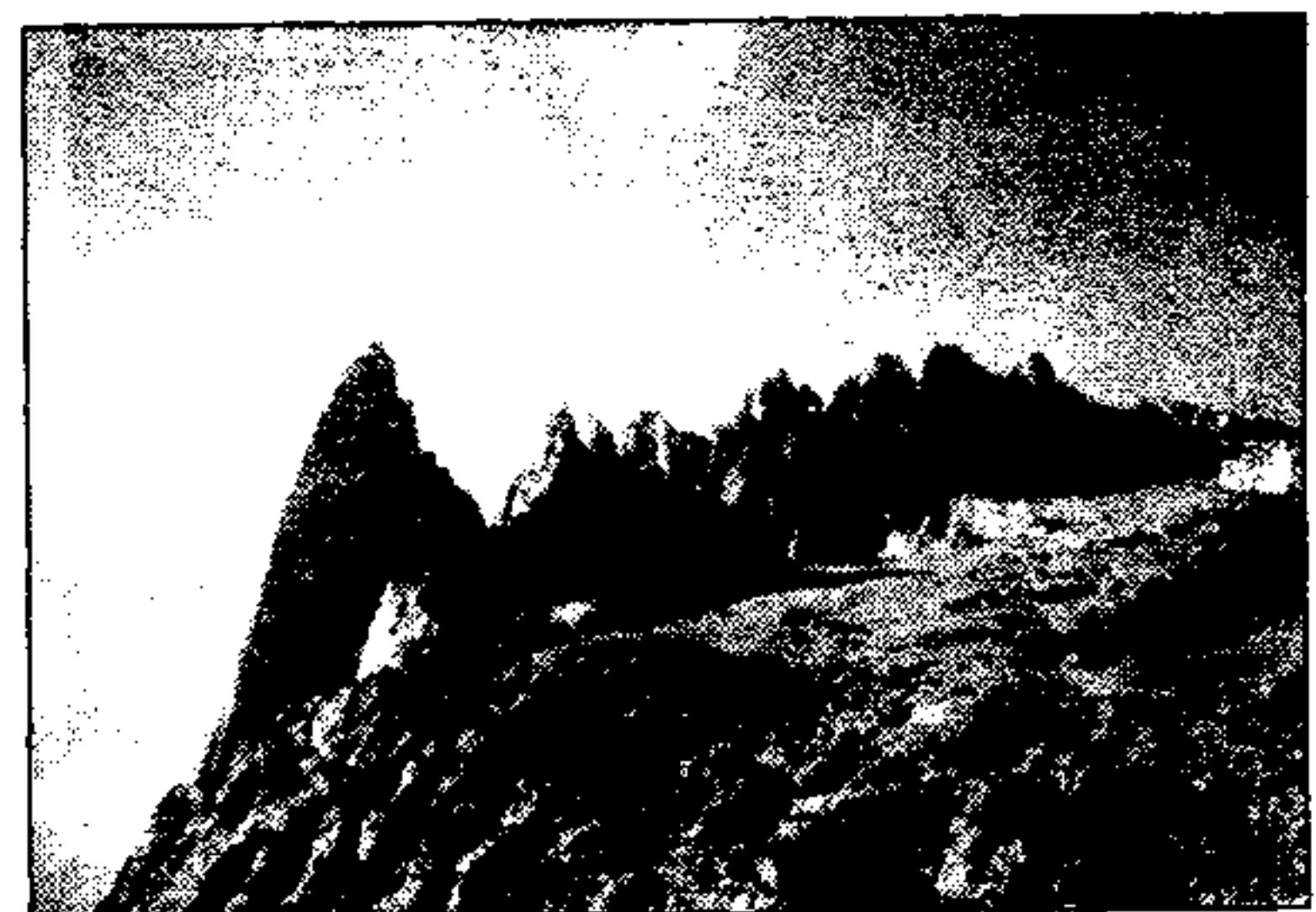


The Baralacha Pass (at 16,000 ft.)

landscape becomes more arid, bleak, bare, barren and dry. The rocks have been chiselled and textured into weird and fantastic shapes, like natural arches, pinnacles, enscarpments and battlements. The landscape gives an impression of expansiveness of nature and an overpowering sense of timelessness. It also reveals the puniness of man. We camped for the night at 14,000 feet.

We descended from the pass through an intricate maze of hills, small streams and brooks, plateaus and gullies till the time came to climb again to the still higher pass next. It is a steep climb accomplished by walking on a series of winding loops of the road called Gata Loops. On this stretch we could see workers of Border Road Organization working under such harsh, cold and windy but at the same time extremely sunny conditions, with their faces tanned black. This climb brought us to Lachulungla Pass at 17,000 feet.

We stayed on the top for about half an hour, enjoying the scenery and taking photographs, and then made haste to descend to the other side for about 20 km along a clear water stream to camp for the night along its bank. Next day saw us descending again till we



Rocks of innovative shapes



The Moray Plain

reached and crossed Sumkyal, which is a deep wide gash in the earth marking the edge of Moray Plain. After climbing the edge of this gorge one suddenly comes across a natural wonder: It is the 'dry as bone' flat plain with alkali flats, 45 km long and 3-7 km wide. There were a few marmots scurrying in between their burrows. Here, if you are lucky you may be able to get a glimpse of a wild horse or a blue mountain sheep. Though without water the plain still grows some hardy, brittle and ground-hugging bushes. The height is 14,650 feet. We met shepherds with their flocks foraging on 'nothing'. We were told that these sheep produce some of the best Pashmina wool in the world. The road here is straight as an arrow and the drivers tend to drive at high speeds after the slow, winding and tedious journey. It is a pleasure to let your vehicle go.

As we started climbing the last 20 km from the other end of the Moray Plain, to our utter surprise we found on the roadside, in the extreme wilderness, an insignificant-looking small stone structure with a Shivalinga installed inside. Though unkempt and uncared for, except perhaps by an occasional traveller,



The Gya Chu Valley

the Shivalinga had its own simplicity and spiritual grandeur.

This last climb brought us to Talangla, the last and the highest of the four passes at a height of 17,582 feet. We hastily crossed it to enable us to reach the lower altitude and to cover the last long descending stretch to Leh. We had lunch at 24 km below the pass on the bank of the Gya Chu stream. At Rumptse, in this fertile Gya Chu valley, we again saw trees, brooks, green fields, apricot orchards and groups of pink-cheeked children surrounding our coach. Throughout this stretch between Patseo and Rumptse there is no population except camps of security forces.

Here I noticed a remarkable change in local children's attitude towards education. During my earlier trips to such remote places, I used to distribute sweets and toffees to children; but for the first time the children refused such offers and instead, asked for pens and pencils. The awareness and sincere yearning for education has taken roots even in such remote, inhospitable and primitive areas.

We reached Leh on the banks of the mighty Indus by nightfall. The Indus valley is



The Talangla Pass (at 17,582 ft.)



A man with his grand-daughters



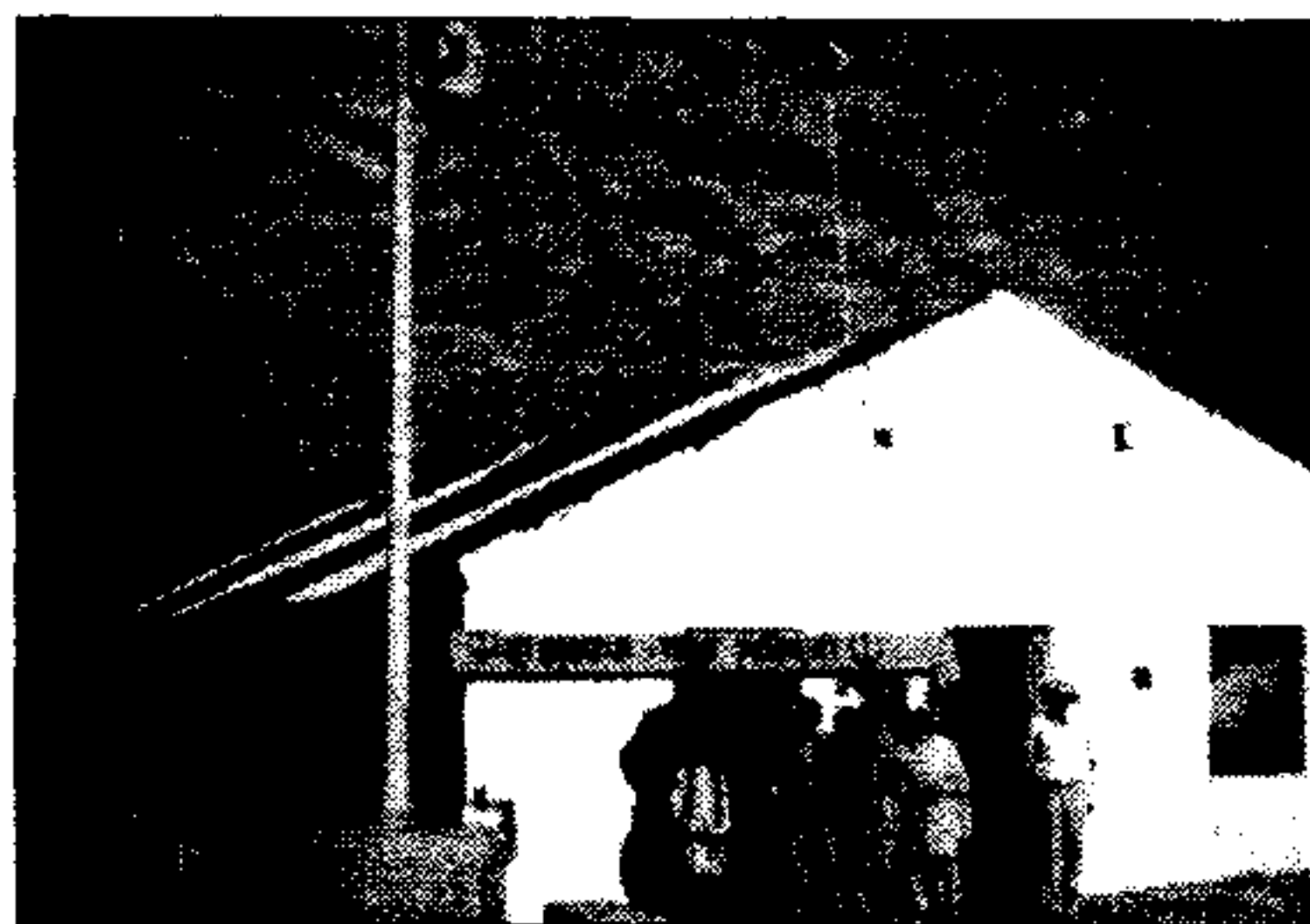
Indus Valley near Leh

much greener than others because of abundant water supply. With better seeds and cultivation techniques, the valley produces bountiful crops of cereals, fruits and vegetables. The modern civilization has changed the life-pattern of local Ladakhis. The modern dress has become so popular that it is difficult to find someone dressed in his traditional costume. Even the traditional names are becoming uncommon.

I left my German friends to travel alone to Gurudwara Pathar Sahib, which is about 30 km west of Leh. It is a little known Sikh shrine, associated with the life of Guru Nanak during his wanderings to propagate his ideals of One God, Name, austerity, etc and completes a missing link in his journeys.

The place was discovered in the early 70s. During my first visit in 1975, it was only a shack-like structure, enclosing a rock face devoid of any decorations or extraneous material to spoil its pristine beauty and stark surroundings. Now the place has grown into a sprawling Gurudwara complex. It was here, according to the story told to me by the Granthi, that the Guru was troubled by an evil spirit, creating impediment in his work. He disposed of the evil spirit by his spiritual power and then, tired, sat down against a rock face to rest and meditate, creating the exact impression of his back.

The importance of this shrine for Sikhism lies in its three distinctive features. One, its association with the first Guru, the founder of Sikhism, its remoteness, and this very character which highlights the extensiveness of his wanderings both for preaching and to experi-



Gurudwara Pathar Sahib

ence ecstasy in solitude. The Pathar Sahib is still not well known. Two, it is only the second Gurudwara where the Guru has left an impression of his body. The other Gurudwara is Gurudwara Panja Sahib, now in Pakistan, which depicts the Guru's hand impression on a rock. Lastly, it is probably a rare Sikh shrine located in a predominantly Buddhist region. The sign greets the visitor with the writing 'GURUDWARA PATHAR SAHIB, LAMA GURU SHRI GURU NANAK DEV JI'. The word 'Lama' added to the Guru denotes the presence of Buddhism in that area, and the help rendered by them in the construction of the shrine. The word Pathar (*shila*) proclaims that the central theme of the shrine has something to do with a natural rock. I paid my obeisance to bring my long journey to the end. I flew back from Leh to Delhi. □



The Holy Impression of Guru Nanak

SYMPOSIUM

SPIRITUAL IDEALS OF HUMANITY

(continued from the previous issue)

Hinduism: Śaivism

PROF S. S. SURYANARAYANA SASTRI

We present select portions of Prof Suryanarayana Sastri's article on 'The Philosophy of Saivism', published in the Cultural Heritage of India, Vol. 3.

Souls are naturally infinite, prevasive, omniscient, etc. Yet they experience themselves as limited, finite, little-knowing. This is due to their bonds, of which there are three—*āṇava*, *karma* and *māyā*. *Āṇava* is a conate impurity; it is what may be called original sin, if by 'sin' we mean nothing more than imperfection. It is present without any beginning in souls, like the husk and bran in paddy or verdigris in copper. It is because of this impurity that the pervasive (*vibhu*) soul cognizes itself as finite (*aṇu*). Because of this limitation of cognitive and conative powers, souls act in certain ways which they take to be good or evil; and these acts bear consequences which have to be worked out by being experienced. The consequences constitute the next bond called *karma*. But in order to experience the consequences and gain knowledge thereby, there should be objects of enjoyment, and instruments of cognition and enjoyment. These are provided by *māyā* of the impure variety.

Souls which have all the three kinds of bonds are called *sakalas*. Those for whom *māyā* alone has been resolved by the involution of the worlds etc, in the periodical deluges, are called *pralayākalas*. *Karma* remains for these in addition to *āṇava* and has to be worked out in fresh worlds etc, in a fresh creation. Those for whom *karma* too is resolved, *āṇava* alone being

left, are called *vijñānākalas*. These reside in the worlds constituted by *śuddha-māyā*.

God is pure, omnipotent, omniscient, gracious, eternally free from bonds. He carries on the fivefold function of creation, preservation, destruction, concealment, and the bestowal of grace. The last is the culmination of all His other functions. Souls, in their essential nature, are the same as God; but their potencies are concealed by beginningless *āṇava*. To remove the obscuration and to reveal innate capacities is the purpose of God's functioning.

When by long experience of transmigration the soul has learnt to equate empirical good and evil, realized that the one is as fleeting and intrinsically worthless as the other, and become indifferent to the acquisition of good *karma* as well as bad, the stage is set for release. The *mala* (lit. 'dirt') that so long obscured and hindered is now ripe and fit for the divine surgeon's knife. The soul no longer cognizes with the evolutes of *aśuddha-māyā* nor with its own feeble flickering intelligence, but seeks the omniscience that is at once its own nature and birthright. There is the onset of divine grace, quick or slow, relative to the capacities of the soul and the activities of physical or mental worship or meditation that it betakes itself to. When grace has fully set in, the Lord reveals Himself and instructs the soul. To the *vijñānākalas* He reveals Himself as

their own inner light; to the *pralayākalas* in a divine supernatural form; to the *sakalas* as a preceptor apparently like one of themselves. By seeing, touching, or instructing He performs the purification (*dīkṣā*). If the ignorance of souls were due to mere absence of knowledge, it could be removed by knowledge; but *mala* is an entity; it is of a positive nature and can be removed only by another positive entity; hence the need for *dīkṣā*. The need for the help of the preceptor does not cease immediately with *dīkṣā*. He has to continue to help for a while, just as the surgeon is required not

merely to operate the cataract, but also to bandage the eye for some days before proper vision is restored. With this restoration, the soul no longer looks on itself as of the nature of *pāśa* or *paśu*, matter or the finite little-knowing spiritual atom. It has been weaned away from association with them and educated to a realization of its own full stature. It realizes its own *Śivatva*; and whatever is cognized is cognized as *Śiva*. There is no more misery or imperfection, since there is no cause thereof. This is the final stage of release. □

Hinduism: Vaiṣṇavism

S. SRINIVASACHAR

Sri Srinivasachar, a specialist in Vaiṣṇavism, was trained as an historian and archeologist. He was in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting as the chief editor of Yojana, the prestigious journal of the Planning Commission. Sri Srinivasachar also served the Ramakrishna Institute of Moral and Spiritual Education, Mysore.

In the long process of evolution man has sought and realized the indispensability of personal relationship with God through prayer and worship. The yearning of man to seek a relationship with this primary force has been continuous and will remain so. In India's religious tradition, with its philosophical roots in the Upaniṣads, the highest goal of an individual has been set as the 'liberation of the Self' from its physical coils and its propensity to commit sins. According to Sankara liberation comes with the attainment of the knowledge of Brahman. The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* says: 'Having known Him, he (the individual) transgresses bondage and there is no other way to attain Him.' The most dramatic illustration of this mystic experience is to be found in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. In this state of supreme bliss the individual becomes one with the Supreme. All duality ceases.

In the Vaiṣṇavite tradition, the spiritual ideal of *mokṣa* acquires a somewhat different shade of meaning. The relationship between

the individual soul (*jivātman*) and Brahman is not accepted as one of identity. The soul does not merge in Brahman and lose its identity like the rain drop in the ocean. It has to be a subject-object relationship between the two as between a seeker of knowledge and knowledge itself. This is the central argument of Ramanuja's Viśiṣṭādvaita as opposed to pure Advaita, which considers Brahman as *nirākāra* and *nirguṇa*. Ramanuja considers Brahman or Viṣṇu as an ocean of auspicious attributes. To Ramanuja, the *Brahma Sūtras* of sage Badarayana, the *Bhagavadgītā*, and the Upaniṣads constitute the scriptural authority. Ramanuja thus elevated bhakti to the status of jnana. The lives and works of the twelve Vaiṣṇava Ālvārs of Tamil Nadu (between circa 8th and 10th centuries) are ideal examples of Viṣṇu bhakti. Since they came from several strata of society, distinctions of caste or sex did not affect their spiritual eminence. Implicitly, he rejected sex and caste differences as irrelevant to attaining the spiritual ideal.

If we were to look for the basic concept that underlies Hinduism in all its variety of manifestations, the answer would be 'bhakti'. This may be roughly translated as 'devotion' or 'surrender to God'. This concept views God as a forgiving father and a fountain of mercy (*dayāmaya* and *karuṇāmaya*) for those whose mind is filled with the constant thought of God. In very general terms it may be said that all the sects that constitute Hinduism are based on the concept of bhakti. Beside the Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite traditions, it has also influenced Buddhists and Jains to some extent.

The term bhakti is derived from the Sanskrit root *bhaj* which means *sevā* according to *Nighaṇṭu*, an ancient Sanskrit glossary. In Upaniṣadic parlance, the same idea occurs as *upāsana*. In the *Bhagavadgītā*, which is regarded as the quintessence of the Vedas and Upaniṣads, bhaktiyoga is mentioned as an easy *upāya* or a shortcut to the liberation of the embodied soul.

Early in the 14th century the Viśiṣṭādvaita tradition acquired a theological slant at the hands of the great scholar, Vedanta Desika. He propounded the concept of *prapatti*, which is an extension of Ramanuja's idea of surrender to God (*śaraṇāgati*). According to Desika, a devotee of Viṣṇu has to seek the help of a guru or ācārya to be initiated into the true Vaiṣṇava tradition. This ācārya, who was qualified to initiate the lay devotee into Viṣṇu bhakti, is also a guardian of his morals. The moral code enjoined on him consists of truthfulness (*satya*), integrity (*ārjava*), benevolence (*dāna*), non-violence (*ahimsā*) and non-covetousness (*anabhidya*). Bhaktiyoga emphasizes the need for mental equanimity as a prerequisite for meditation, prayer or worship.

Ramanuja's bhakti philosophy spread to other parts of the country—like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Bengal, Orissa, Assam—in the course of time, giving rise to scores of saint-philosophers who found in it the seeds of liberalism, social reform, and universality. Among the most notable of the Vaiṣṇava saints in the post-Ramanuja era were

Ramananda of Kasi, his pupil Kabir, Tulsidas, Vallabhacharya (the founder of Śuddhādvaita), Sri Krishna Chaitanya of Bengal and Sankar Dev of Assam. They, together with a host of other saints, carried forward the Vaiṣṇavite ideal of oneness of God, the equality of all souls and the approachability of God by anyone who is imbued with bhakti and a spirit of non-attachment. Many saints, like Purandaradas, Kanakadas, Tulsidas, Kabir, Meera, Narsingh Mehta, Nimbarka, etc were composers and singers. Nimbarka, a Telugu brahmin, projected the Vaiṣṇavite ideal through his philosophy of dualism. He developed a Vaiṣṇava cult under the name of Sanat-kumara Narada Saṁpradāya, not dissimilar in many respects to that of Ramanuja. Vallabha, the founder of Śuddhādvaita Vedānta, drew his inspiration from *Bhāgavata*, extolling Lord Krishna as the ultimate God. Nimbarka identified Radha-Krishna with Brahman. Although he was influenced by the *Pañcarātras*, he did not advocate temple worship but accepted *prapatti* as the means to liberation. His followers spread the Radha-Krishna cult and thus emphasized the *rati bhāva* (the lover-beloved) aspect of devotion. Here the devotee places himself in the aspect of the bride and yearns for union with her Beloved, the Lord. In Maharashtra, Jñaneswara (13th century) founded a bhakti school with Viṭṭhala as the central object of worship. He emphasized as equally efficacious all the nine forms of bhakti mentioned in the *Bhāgavata*. Maharashtra produced a long line of saint-philosophers like Namadeva, Ekanatha, Tukarama, Ramadasa, etc, whose lives and songs have kept the Vaiṣṇavite ideal alive in Maharashtra to this day.

Among the towering Vaiṣṇavite philosophers after Ramanuja, the most important is Madhvacharya, the founder of the Dvaita school of philosophy. A staunch advocate of Vaiṣṇavism and bhakti, he strongly opposed Sankara's Advaita and emphasized the eternal duality of the human soul with Brahman. He was the author of unqualified dualism and

argued that the distinction between God and the human soul, soul and soul, soul and matter, God and matter, are all eternal and unbridgeable. According to him, liberation can come only through Viṣṇu bhakti. He did not reject caste though everyone could strive for God's mercy by supreme devotion and sincere performance of their respective duties. To Madhvacharya, the Purāṇas, extolling the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu, were also a scriptural authority.

Of late, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), founded by Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, has been spreading the Chaitanya school of bhakti, based on the worship of Radha-Krishna. The *Bhagavadgītā* and the *Bhāgavata* are considered as scriptural authorities. This school of bhakti gives importance to the repetition of the names of Rama and Krishna in a spirit of devotion. □

Islam

PROF AMINUL ISLAM

Prof Aminul Islam is professor, Department of Philosophy, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. He was the dean of the faculty of arts for some time. Prof Islam has been one of those who are endeavouring to make people understand the true spirit of religion so that quarrels and unrest in its name may come to an end. Here are his wonderful thoughts about the spiritual ideal of humanity according to Islam.

Man, according to Islam, is not just an ordinary being amongst the host of other beings that inhabit the universe. He is unique in the sense that God created him in His own image and breathed into him His own spirit. This single extraordinary divine action has bestowed on man the glory of being the highest and the noblest of creation and the viceregent of God on earth. God, the creator and sustainer of the universe, is man's guardian, patron and great helper both in this world and the next. According to the Holy Quran, man of his free choice accepted the responsibility of evolving divine qualities and bringing about a heavenly order in this world of imperfection.

This characterization of man does not, however, account for the whole of man's being which alongside of its higher spiritual aspect has also a lower biological part, composed of emotions and propensities. Indeed, the life of man is fraught with the danger of degeneration provoked by the vile propensities latent in his nature. Hence, man's ideal consists in strengthening and evolving his divine quali-

ties by struggling against the evil forces and reaching nearest to God, and thus achieving perfection of manhood. The Holy Quran views the world as a place for soul-making and says, 'Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you' (49:13). While enunciating this spiritual ideal prophet Muhammad also urges his followers to imbibe the attributes of God; for he who comes nearest to God is, he says, the most perfect man.

This is no doubt a momentous responsibility and a great challenge for man inasmuch as he has to face many trying circumstances and fight a persistent battle with the evil forces. But for a serious and sincere man there is no cause for despondency; because man, says the Holy Quran, is not powerless. He is the trustee of a free personality. He can distinguish between the good and the evil and can freely choose one or the other. So he alone is responsible for his rise or fall, his perfection or degeneration. Besides, God has not left man without guidance, so that he knows what his

spiritual ideal is and how he can prove himself worthy of the highest position bestowed on him. The Holy Quran categorically declares: 'Allah does not change the condition of people unless they themselves change the same.' A good Muslim, who is also a good man, should therefore follow the right track and make his destiny in a manner worthy of his position as the viceregent of God on earth.

Now, as for the course of action to be adopted for the implementation of this ideal, the position of Islam is very clear. The essence of virtue lies not in monastic renunciation, but in vigorous action. Salvation here and hereafter is for him who submits himself to God and performs virtuous activities. Not the praying devotee, but the worker, it is said, is the friend of God. Thus the concept of asceticism has no place in Islam. The world is changing, and so is human life. So one needs to take active part in this dynamic process, reshape the environment and act as a co-worker with God for building up a better world.

According to Islam, God is not away from the world, but immanent in the world-process. He manifests Himself in and through natural phenomena. Hence the best way to know God is to know nature, which is the visible garment of God. Islam thus exhorts man to explore the knowledge of science and to control and harness the natural forces with a view to improving and fostering both secular and spiritual values. One has to conquer nature by scientific study which is virtually an act of worship.

Islam urges the Muslim to shun all kinds of extremism and adopt a policy of moderation in all walks of life. For example, it admonishes all to lay equal emphasis on sacred and secular, otherworldly and worldly activities. Our present life, it warns, is not an empty dream, but a seed-ground for the life to come. So if we are at all to attain a higher state in the next world, we have to seek all our values of life here in this world. Similarly, there is no sense in drawing a sharp line of demarcation between spirit and matter. For, they are not opposed to each other, but are two correlated

and complementary parts of one and the same reality. Thus spirit finds opportunities for self-realization in the material and secular order and matter achieves real meaning and significance only when coupled with moral and spiritual values. Hence, the true ideal of life consists neither in spirituality nor materialism, but in a true synthesis, a happy marriage between these two extremes.

A true Muslim is commanded to shun both unrestricted capitalism and communism and adopt what may aptly be called rational socialism, which looks upon all members of the society as equal and allows none to exploit others for the gratification of selfish motives. The mandatory system of *zakat* and the abolition of usury are two Islamic measures specifically aimed at thwarting such selfish designs, ensuring social equality and economic justice and ushering in a truly humanist society.

For Islam, religion is for man and not man for religion. Thus notwithstanding the unqualified emphasis on the oneness of God (*tawhid*) the Holy Quran states clearly that the conception of the unity of God leads willy-nilly to the conception of the unity of man. The Prophet is thus reminded: 'We have not sent thee otherwise than to mankind at large, to announce and to warn' (34:27). There is no scope for fanaticism and communalism, and discrimination between man and man in the name of religion. For, the Holy Quran straightaway discards compulsion in religion (2:256) and says, salvation is not a monopoly of any single set of people. A man, whatever be his identity, is entitled to salvation here and hereafter simply by the purity of his faith and good conduct. Indeed, what is important for a true Muslim is not the rituals and formalities of religion, but internal purification of the heart, aimed at love for and service to man and God.

While emphasizing the importance of man's duty to God the Holy Quran declares in no uncertain terms the importance of man's duty to man. Not only this, performance of duty to God, says the Quran, becomes void if duty to man is ignored or not performed well.

Muslims are thus commanded to shun all kinds of sectional affiliation, to seek God in man and to extend their brotherhood to all mankind irrespective of caste, creed, colour and clime. As the Holy Quran says, 'Mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that you may despise each other)' (49:13).

This spirit of universal solidarity and love, to which Islam draws our attention and which forms an integral part of the spiritual

ideal of man, is very significant, especially in view of the heart-breaking tension and dissension prevailing all over the world today. If we seriously want to allay the material and spiritual miseries of men and women around the globe, foster a sense of solidarity among them and, above all, if we mean to save humanity from utter destruction, then we have no alternative but to preach and practise this perennial philosophy of universal love which is also the underlying gospel of all true religions. □

Jainism

MUNNI MAHARAJ

We present the spiritual ideals of Jainism, compiled from a back issue of Prabuddha Bharata.

Man's real nature is the same as *satcidānanda*. But it remains hidden under the covering of his karma. When the whole of his karma is destroyed by the roots, the atman reaches the state of Paramatman, and after this life, enjoys the highest Self-consciousness. Karma and creation, both are beginningless. There is no creator. If God were the creator He must have had in Him attachment and aversion, which is impossible; and if God be supposed to be tainted with attachment and aversion, He cannot be held up as object of meditation, nor can He give *mukti*. Hence Jainism believes in the great Perfected Ones, the Tirthankaras, as the personifications of God, who are born from time to time, in the course of an indefinite period of the cycle of time called *Utsarpiṇī* and *Avasarpini* and the worship and meditation on these Tirthankaras in images are ordained as helpful to *mukti*.

Jaina dharma is divided into two aspects: one for the sannyasin and the other for the householder. The sannyasin's dharma consists in forbearance, gentleness, uprightness, absence of greed, cessation of desires, self-control, observance of cleanliness, following

truth, renunciation of everything and practising *brahmacarya*. In order to follow these duties of the monk, one should take up the five great vows or root-qualities of non-injuring any being, affability, honesty, continence and non-receiving of gifts. These are again five *samitis* or right actions, which are to be strictly observed for the proper realization of the above-mentioned root-qualities in practical life. The *samitis* are: (1) to walk by looking 3½ cubits in front, (2) to utter speech with due consideration so as not to cause pain to anyone, (3) to eat 42 kinds of ordained food which are free from taint, (4) to accept and keep for use such things as are conducive to self-control by first cleaning them, and (5) to perform daily acts of cleanliness in such places as not to hurt any life.

The duties of the householder consist of twelve vows: five of them are the performance of the same vows as those of the monks, only in a partial way. The other vows are: (1) to define the legitimate limits of one's own self-interest and never transgress them, (2) regulation of food and clothes, (3) to eschew vain acts, (4) to meditate on the Self daily in a

solitary place, (5) to limit one's self-interest as much as possible, (6) to practise the duties of the monk once in a while, and (7) not to eat before giving a share of it to holy men. Those whose devotion falls short of attaining *mokṣa* go to the plane of the Devas after death; others

according to their merits take birth in human or inferior animal bodies, or go to hell. Though the Jains are divided into the two sects, called Digambaras and Śvetāmbaras, they have no difference of opinion in essential points. □

Judaism

J. A. ISSAC & REV M. E. D. COHEN

Here is an overview in brief of the religion of the Hebrews. This write-up has been prepared using two articles, by Mr J.A. Issac and Rev M.E.D. Cohen, published in Prabuddha Bharata in its June 1909 number.

The name 'Judaism' has been given to the religion of the Hebrews by the Greco-Roman writers after the second commonwealth of the Hebrews. The fundamental principle of Judaism is the One Absolute Being or Spirit, above all limitations, who calls Himself 'I am that I am.' Man is regarded as a free agent; he has choice between good and evil. Universal brotherhood is one of the most prominent features of this religion. The Ten Commandments of Judaism are: (1) to know and acknowledge one eternal Omnipotent God and Saviour; (2) to refrain from worshipping false gods; (3) to use the name of God with due reverence, and to avoid blasphemy, false speech, oaths, etc; (4) to observe the Sabbath (lit. 'rest') day—Saturday according to Jews—devoting the day to the worship of God. The other sacred days to be observed are the Passover, the Pentecost, the Day of Memorial to celebrate the New Year, the Day of Atonement, and the feast of Tabernacles (meaning, harvest-tide); (5) to love, respect and obey parents, and to be dutiful towards elders, superiors, equals and inferiors, in all our relations with them; (6) to avoid everything that injures or destroys life, and to do all lawful endeavour to preserve life; (7) to be pure, chaste and modest in all our thoughts, words and actions; (8) not to take

away what belongs to others, and to be honourable in all our dealings; (9) to refrain from bearing false witness, false rumours, backbiting, etc; (10) not to indulge in envy or avarice, and to be content with one's lot. Just as the Bible is a sacred book, so are all scriptures that teach great moral truths and elevate man and inspire him with the love of truth, light, etc.

So far as salvation is concerned, not the creed but the deed is the cardinal principle in Judaism. The non-observance of ceremonials and rituals does not affect its fundamental principle. Salvation is obtained only through one's own deeds and merits, virtue bringing its own reward and vice its own punishment. No intermediary is recognized between man and God. Each person has to be responsible for his own sins. Salvation, however, is equally obtainable by pious and righteous men of other creeds. Judaism makes it obligatory on everyone to pray daily for the spiritual progress of the world. The Jew does not pray for the conversion of other people to Judaism, nor that sinners may perish, but that the world may turn unto God. To the Jew the house of prayer is not the gate to heaven but the gate to righteousness. We take God to be our King, every man His priest, every table His altar, and every meal a sacrifice. □

Sikhism

SMT MOHINDER KAUR

Smt Mohinder Kaur is Honorary Director, Balbir Singh Sahitya Kendra, Dehra Dun as well as Editor, Panchbati Sandesh, the monthly of the Kendra. Smt Kaur is the daughter of the illustrious scholar, Dr Balbir Singh. In this beautiful article, Smt Mohinder Kaur presents a systematic and clear view of the Sikh view of the goal of humanity.

It was a crucial period of ferment on the Indian horizon in the year 1469 AD when Guru Nanak was born in the village of Talwandi (Punjab, now in Pakistan). He came with a message of hope and joy and propounded the doctrine of universal love, peace, brotherhood and eternal truth. The followers of this path came to be known as Sikhs (disciples).

A disciple may merely be involved in secular learning and worldly skills, but the Sikh is a learner in the spiritual sense as well. Although the path was founded by Guru Nanak, nine successive Gurus had to undergo untold hardships, torture and sacrifice to accomplish the mission. The culmination was, however, reached during the period of the tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, on the Baisākhī day of 1699 AD.

The political upheaval had wrecked the moral fibre of the people. They had become dispirited, disheartened and bereft of their self-esteem under the tyranny and oppression of the alien rulers. Then there was the evil of caste system which was like a canker worm, working from within. Guru Nanak had an arduous task before him to rejuvenate and emancipate the degenerated society. His clarion call for universal love and brotherhood brought about an awakening. He made people aware of the values based on equality, fraternity and freedom. For Guru Nanak religion and spirituality were not to be individual's personal concerns for the other world and his own salvation; instead, it was his moral duty to associate with the temporal concerns of the

people also. Guru Nanak helped people to step out of their individualistic existence and made them aware of their social obligations and responsibilities. His message was common to people of all the traditional classes and sects of society—it was not to be an exclusive or a sectarian religion. God was equally accessible to everyone, regardless of caste and religion. The institutions of common kitchen (*langar*) and religious congregation (*sangat*) greatly helped to inculcate a feeling of brotherhood, kinship, and belonging amongst the Sikhs, thus overcoming the bane of casteism. The institutions also helped to instil the virtue of *sevā*, which works as an elixir to help cure the most potent vice of ego.

One had not to go to the forests in search of Truth according to Guru Nanak. Humility, simplicity and purity of heart were the prerequisites for the pathway to Truth. Man is inherently divine, but this divinity has to be cultivated and cultured. A devotee of Truth (*sat*) has to be honest to the core and practise it as a spiritual value. Guru Nanak himself raised this question and in his non-egoistic humility, clarified: 'By following the Will of the Creator that is in-built in the human at the moment of creation, one is able to be truthful' (*Japji*).

Sikhism lays stress on the unity between the theory and practice of truthfulness. Thus it is proclaimed in the *Śrī Guru Granth Sāhib*: 'Truth is the highest of all but higher still is truthful living.' At another place the Guru declares:

The three things are in the vessel,
Truth, contentment and intellect.
The ambrosial name of God is added to it,
The name that is everybody's sustenance.
He who absorbs and enjoys it shall be saved.

—*Ādi Granth*, p-1429.

A Sikh has to be a seeker of Truth in thought, speech and action to cleanse his soul of humanity's sins. Guru Nanak has benignly prescribed the beautiful doctrine of the true name. The Sikh faith is thus founded upon truth that is the true name of the Lord. 'Let your hands be engaged in work, but let your mind dwell on the lotus feet of the Beloved' (*Ādi Granth*, p-1376). The Guru says: 'Within thy mind contemplate thou on God and with thy tongue utter the Guru's name. Within thine eyes, behold the true Guru and with thine ears, hear the Guru's name. Being imbibed with the true Guru, thou shall find a seat in the Lord's court' (*Ādi Granth*, p-517). This is *mukti* for a Sikh, a unity which is the purpose of human life. The practise of *nām yoga* as a single coherent act of religiosity is a prominent contribution of Sikhism.

Guru Nanak's works are contained in the sacred volume of the Sikhs, known as the *Ādi Granth* or *Śrī Guru Granth Sāhib*. The whole volume contains 5894 hymns, written by 36 persons—six Gurus and 30 bhaktas representing the entire phase of the bhakti movement, beginning with Jayadeva (12th century) and ending with Guru Arjan (1563-1606), to which was incorporated Guru Teg Bahadur's (1621-75) writings. Most of these saints experienced oppression at the hands of the alien rulers. In the *Ādi Granth* all these heroes and martyrs have their expression and spirit reflected. The gospel is in the language of the people, giving them a message of liberation transcending the caste barriers. It treasures the varied religious thoughts inclusive of Muslims.

The *Gurbāṇī* is not the paper or the ink, but the true Reality. Guru Arjan said: 'The Book is the abode of God.' The tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, invested Gurudom on

the *pothi* of the *Ādi Granth*, the *Śrī Guru Granth Sāhib*.

In the Holy Book resides the Lord.

Those who sing His praises in the company
of Saints attain divine knowledge.

Seers and sages thirst,

But only a few attain concentration on Him...

—*Ādi Granth*, p-1226.

For a Sikh, the *Śrī Guru Granth Sāhib* is the ultimate Reality, Knowledge, Truth, and Beauty. Swami Vivekananda exclaims: 'Get rid, in the first place, of all these limited ideas and see God in every person—working through all hands, walking through all feet, and eating through every mouth. In every being He lives, through all minds He thinks. He is self-evident, nearer unto us than ourselves. ... I am not this limited little being, I am the universal. I am the life of all the sons of the past. I am the soul of Buddha, of Jesus, of Mohammed. I am the soul of the teachers, and I am all the robbers that robbed, and all the murderers that were hanged, I am the universal. Stand up then; this is the highest worship. You are one with the universe. That only is humility—not crawling upon all fours and calling yourself a sinner' (Swami Vivekananda, *Complete Works*, Vol. 1, p. 341).

The Sikh view is similar, expressed earlier by Gurus and devotees in the *Ādi Granth*. It is said: '*Man tū jyot swarūp hai, apanā mūl paichān*, My self! You are the image of divine Light. Realize your own exalted origin' (*Ādi Granth*, p-441). Again: 'He the Creator or the true One is eternal *jyot*. He is manifest in all things. He is also the unmanifest Ground of all things. He is formless. He is transcendent. Out of Himself, Nanak, He makes all things. Into Himself all things are absorbed again' (*Sukhmani*, Aṣṭapadi-21). The supremacy of man over all creatures lies in his degree of spirituality. The *jyot* is the reality of man. *Jyot* is consciousness. Body is *jada*, matter. These two exist everywhere. The human body to the Sikh is the abode of God. 'In the body God is present. The body is His temple' (*Ādi Granth*, p-695). Sikh Gurus make no distinction be-

tween the individual soul and the universal soul. 'Oh Nanak, One God is all-pervading. Where is there to be seen another?' (*Sukhmani*, Aṣṭapadi-22).

The spiritual plane of living is a balance of several planes of life, called *khaṇḍ*s by Guru Nanak. These are: *dharam-khaṇḍ*, the region of duty; *gyān-khaṇḍ*, the region of knowledge; *saram-khaṇḍ*, the region of devotion; and *karam-khaṇḍ*, the region of action. Constantly living in these regions transports man to the region of the Spirit or Truth, the *sac-khaṇḍ*. He realizes a perfect harmony of knowledge, devotion, and action. His personality is thus chiselled by devotion or *nām simran*.

A spiritualized man, while involved in life, acts in complete consciousness, *gyān*, according to the Will from within. He is universal in his outlook and for him all polarities vanish. He becomes a man of integrated personality, not easily swayed by emotion.

The Sikh Gurus were keenly alive to the

power of arts as media of thought and culture to raise the standard of spirituality in mankind. Thus music and poetry have occupied a place of unique importance in the traditional music and poetry for the communication of the Gospel of *Śrī Guru Granth Sāhib*. Anyone listening to the *kirtan* of *Gurbāṇī* will be deeply affected, and will experience spiritual bliss.

The advent of this glorious movement pioneered by Guru Nanak has pointed a pathway, walking along which leads one to the growth of supernal bliss in life. Prayer—through which the welfare of the entire mankind is sought—and seeking His grace generates a personal rapport with the Almighty. Sikhism is a simple and practical religion, which is ideally suited for all humanity. One has to follow these cardinal principles:

- (a) Practise honest labour (*kirat*);
- (b) Share the earnings with the needy;
- (c) Resist injustice; and
- (d) *Nām simran*. □

Sufism

LLEWELLYN VAUGHAN-LEE

Mr Vaughan-Lee, President, The Golden Sufi Center, California, USA, presents a brilliant synopsis of the spiritual ideal of life according to Sufism.

Sufism is a mystical path of love, a journey from separation back to union with God. This journey takes place within the heart, the home of the soul. Within the heart the lover experiences the pain of separation, and is drawn by love and longing back to the Beloved. Within the heart the lover loses all trace of self, merges into love until the soul cries, 'I am He whom I love, He whom I love is me.'

Each wayfarer walks this path of love according to his own nature, for the Sufi knows that 'There are as many ways to God as there are human beings, as many as the breaths of the children of men.' The path reminds us of our true nature; that we are made in the image of God and are here in this world

to love and serve Him. The path gradually lifts the veils that separate us from our Self, until we see in the mirror of the heart the reflection of our divine nature.

This is the ancient way of love that has been since the beginning of time. For centuries lovers have been walking the path of longing, a path born of separation that draws us back to union, back to the oneness of love. In the writings of the Sufis are left traces of this journey, footprints to guide the traveller. But the real journey belongs to the mystery of divine love, of the way the heart opens to God, and He infuses it with remembrance of Himself.

Once the Beloved has looked into the heart of His lover the ancient journey of the

soul begins. The spark in the heart is ignited, the longing is set aflame. The lover tends to this flame with devotion and the practices of the path, with meditation, *dhikr* (repetition of the name of God), and the work of inner purification, what the Sufis call 'polishing the mirror of the heart.' We learn patience and perseverance, humility and spiritual courage. We follow the guidance of our *sheikh* and realize that the outer teacher always points to the inner teacher, our own higher Self, and also discover that the greatest teacher is life itself.

But the real work of the lover is to give himself to love, to the way the Beloved comes into our heart and empties us of ourself. This is why Jami said, 'Never turn away from love, not even love in a human form, because love alone will release you from yourself.' The lover knows that he alone is the veil of separation, and that 'only when you lose yourself will you reach the Beloved.' Love will free us from ourself, but the price is the tears of longing and the burning within the heart. Love is a sweet sorrow and a fire that consumes the lover. These are the mysteries of love that belong to the way of the Sufi.

And yet we have to live this mystery in a world that more and more turns towards materialism, that is caught in a cycle of greed and forgetfulness. The Sufi has to live his longing in the marketplace of the world. In the midst of the world we love Him and remember Him.

In the words of one great Sufi, 'The perfect mystic goes in and out amongst the people and eats and sleeps with them and buys and sells in the market and marries and takes part in social intercourse and never forgets God for a single instant.' Through our longing and love, our devotion and prayers, we bring the light of His love into the midst of life.

We belong to our Beloved, and as we turn towards Him His light and love come into our heart and into our life. We are here in His world for His sake. For the Sufi the greatest honour is to be His servant. Empty of intention we are used by our Beloved. Sufis are realists and know that this world is not perfect, but they have glimpsed behind the veils of separation and know that this is a world of revelation. 'He who was one and alone longed to be known and so created the world.'

Through our tears we are drawn to Him, through our longing we turn away from ourself back to our Beloved. All else falls away and we come to know the hidden face of creation, that there is nothing other than God. In the words of Abu Saida, 'Sufism consists in keeping the heart from anything that is not He. But there is nothing that is not He.' He reveals Himself in the hearts of those who love Him.

'Man is My secret and I am his. The inner knowledge of the spiritual essence is a secret of My secrets.' □

Zoroastrianism

What does the religion of Zarathushtra say about the supreme end of life? The Zoroastrian view is presented here. This article has been adapted from an old number of Prabuddha Bharata.

The Zoroastrian religion is monotheistic. The supreme Being is called 'Ahura', or 'Mazda', or 'Ahura Mazda'. 'Ahura' means the Lord of existence, and 'Mazda' means the great Knower, the omniscient Lord. We find the word 'Asura' ('Ahura' in the *Avesta*) used in the older Vedic hymns in a perfectly good

sense, and as a name of several Devas themselves, which fact clearly shows that there must have been once a vital struggle between the professors of the Devas and those of the Ahura religion, in consequence of which the originally good meaning of 'Asura' was changed to a bad one.

Ahura Mazda is conceived of as having two influences at work under Him, viz, the spirit of creation and the spirit of destruction. The two influences acting upon a man's thoughts, words and deeds cause good mind or bad mind, and produce good thoughts, good words and good actions, or bad ones. These three are the pivots on which the moral structure of Zoroastrianism turns. The Zoroastrians worship the Ahura Mazda in fire, which is regarded as His most suitable representative. The fire is worshipped in a special chamber of the fire temple of the Parsees, where it is kept burning day and night. To the

Parsee the elaborate process of purifying the fire, which is 'pure by itself,' 'the noblest of the creations of God,' before it can be put upon its exalted position—means how much more purification is needed by a poor, weak, mortal man for an exalted position in the next world. Fires collected from men of different grades of society similarly impress the Parsee with the idea of equality of all men, provided they are purified. The sacred fire burning in a fire temple serves as a perpetual monitor to the Parsee standing before it, of piety, purity, humility and brotherhood. □

The Human Aspect of Divine Incarnations

We had no idea of the hidden springs of power and holiness of the great ones known as incarnations such as Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Sankara, Chaitanya and others, till we had the blessing of seeing the divine form of Sri Ramakrishna. We laboured under the misconception that the record of the uncommon events in their lives were later additions made by disciples with the ulterior motive of adding to their own number. And the incarnations themselves, we inferred, were queer, imaginary, mythical beings without any significance to the civilized world. Or, even when it was conceded that God could assume forms and incarnate Himself, it could not be believed that human traits like those in us would be present in these incarnations also. It could not be easily conceived that their bodies could be subject to diseases, that pain and pleasure were present in their minds, and that a fight between God and Satan could ever have gone on in them as in us, ordinary mortals. We have come to know the truth about this through the holy contact with Sri Ramakrishna.

Those great souls whose lives are unique expressions of Divine glory and are of immense spiritual significance leave behind new moulds formed of their lives and experiences, which become models and patterns for others to follow. Such unique personalities are worshipped as incarnations of God. Incarnations discover new religious doctrines, new paths. They impart the power of spirituality to others by a mere touch. Their energy is never directed to the glamour of lust and gold in this transitory world. It becomes clear by a study of their lives that they are born to show others the path to God-realization.

—Swami Saradananda in *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master*

Contemporary Trends in Indian Classical Music

APARNA CHAKRAVARTI

Smt Chakravarti from Calcutta is a famous exponent of the Agra gharāna. She has participated in numerous music conferences both in India and abroad. She is also well known as a music critic, and writes for popular dailies and journals. It's with this vast experience that she expresses her pain at the present trend of music in this article. Smt Chakravarti presents a brief but excellent study of the present classical-music scenario and suggests ways and means to improving the standard of our glorious musical heritage.

Indian music has a long history. What is interesting is that it is still a living tradition—the one reason being that this ancient art has a sound scientific base. From the 16th century onwards, great strides were made in the field of performance of music; but the relevance of theory was forgotten. Attempts at codification had been made already. For example, Raja Man Singh Tomar of Gwalior (1485-1516) had compiled *dhrupads* in his book *Man-kutūhal* with the help of *ustāds* like Naiks Bakshu, Bhannu, etc. He had not hesitated to call even Mian Tansen an *atai*, ie, one not cognizant of music rules. This book was translated into Persian and titled *Raga Darpan* during Aurangzeb's time by Faqirulla, who like Walter Raleigh was a soldier-cum-historian-cum-musician.

The Muslim conquest of India and its concomitant intermingling of cultures was hardly felt in south India. In Hindustani or north Indian music (to which I shall restrict my comments), the impact was tremendous. In this context, Amir Khusrau's name is worth mentioning, as the mixing of ragas and compositions, and also music forms like *ghazal*, *qawwālī*, *quāl*, etc are attributed to him.

The Mughal emperors, including Aurangzeb who in later life wanted to bury music for good, had been patrons of music. Tansen in Akbar's court was a great performer and composer. Hundreds of his *dhrupads* have come down to us. In Muhammed Shah Rangile's (1719-48) court was the legendary

Niyamat Khan (also called Sadarang), to whom is attributed the credit of evolving the *khayāl* from *dhrupad*. Thousands of his *khayāls* (some are probably interpolations) are sung even now.

With the advent of the British and exit of Mughals, the musicians of Delhi durbar became homeless, so to say. Many were absorbed into the so-called 'native' states, scattered all over the country. As distances were great and transport facilities poor, musicians couldn't interact often, and so the emergence of the *gharāna* (school or denomination) system was a natural outcome. The kings and nawabs became the connoisseurs—often themselves performers—of music.

Up to the 19th century, music soirées and *jalsās* had been confined to the durbars of kings and houses of petty zamindars. A great change was noticed in the beginning of the 20th century when music came out in the open from ashrams and *jalsāghars*. The common man entered into the so-far-forbidden portals of music since then.

In a decadent society, music had become the tool of debased landlords and their ilk. It was then that the two Vishnus—Vishnu Digambar Paluskar and Vishnu Narain Bhatkhande—gave it a new turn with their missionary zeal. Schools of music were founded in Lahore (1901) and in Bombay by Paluskar, and in Gwalior and other centres by Bhatkhande. These indefatigable crusaders of music toured the length and breadth of India,

collecting compositions (*bandishes*) from *ustāds* and publishing them in book form. The layman was given an opportunity to learn both the practical and theoretical side of music from their books. We must gratefully remember the many far-sighted *ustāds* who agreed to make public the well-guarded 'treasures' of their *gharānas*. They even agreed to teach in the Marris College of Music (now Bhatkhande University). Thakur Nawab Ali became an ardent supporter of Bhatkhande. His *Marfane Naghamat* is a compilation of compositions in the Bhatkhande-notation system which is now the most popular system in the country. Bengal also played a leading part in the compilation and notation of hundreds of classical compositions. Soumendra Mohan Tagore, Krishnadhan Bandopadhyay and others were the torchbearers in this field. Stalwarts of the Bishnupur *gharāna*, such as Gopeshwar Banerji and others, have given us great treasures in the form of compositions with notations. However, it is indeed a pity that their books are not available now. It is imperative that they be reprinted.

The first-ever music conference was held in Baroda in 1915. Though such conferences were performed in larger arenas than the courtyards of the rich where a large number of listeners could be accommodated, in the mode of presentation, adherence to tradition and the close rapport between listeners and artistes the style was the same as before. Gradually music schools came up. Some universities introduced music also as a subject in their curriculum. A music university—the Khairagarh University—came into being. Besides these, a few self-styled music academies and *samitis* gained prominence as purveyors of degrees and diplomas. Thousands of students are churned out every year from these examining bodies. One wonders if there are any artistes among them.

Here we come to a very important point. The teacher-disciple lineage (*guru-śiṣya paramparā*), that age-old oral tradition of teaching music and the system of imparting knowl-

edge in schools. The *gharāna* (a much bandied word) means a family, but its significance lies in the fact that each *gharāna* nurtured a particular style of music which was easily recognizable by the discerning listeners. In the *gharāna* were not only the scions of the family but also disciples who formed part of it. Often when the *gharānas* became extinct, the tradition was carried on by the disciples. Nowadays the *gharāna* system is practically extinct, and classical music has taken an eclectic form. There are still '*gharāndar*' *ustāds*, like the Babus of Nayanjod, who pride in their *gharāna*. Music is becoming stereotyped. The nuances of classical music are being knowingly or unknowingly ignored. But if our traditional classical music is to be preserved, the *guru-śiṣya* syndrome is not to be discounted easily.

With the electronic explosion during the last 30 years, a sea change is discernible in the field of music. The tape-recorder has taken the place of the guru. Though the tape-recorder is very helpful, it cannot be a guru's substitute. The growth of advertising has made music a marketable commodity like any other consumer item. And to whom is this music catered for? First, the genuine music lovers—either connoisseurs or just laymen, fond of music. Second, the pseudo-listeners—they listen because music is the 'done' thing. Third, listeners out for instant excitement—they form the largest number. The patrons of classical music today are (1) the Government, (2) the corporate sector, and (3) small music circles and private parties with meagre means but genuine interest in music. Since independence, the Indian Government has spent a lot of money and deliberation in furthering the cause of culture—art, literature, music, etc. About this there can be no two opinions. Unfortunately the holding of grand festivals and *utsavas* have hardly managed to stem the tide of the gradual qualitative deterioration of our culture. The number of functions of 'glitteratis' has increased a hundredfold, but the quality has gone down proportionately.

Artistes cannot distance themselves from

the milieu. People with a marketing sense can make the most profit, so what do we have now? Artistes, especially those with a 'star' value, are not bothered about the fate of our music. It's like making hay while the sun shines: they are interested in making money, using all modes of publicity. The accent is also in providing instant excitement. The *bhāva* or *rasa* (emotive quality) of our classical music is based on the various emotions inherent in various ragas. But nowadays, a large repertoire is redundant. The accent is not on sublimity but on recreation. The transcendental quality, which is the hallmark of all music, is lost in the cacophony of sound. We notice the emergence of the tabla as a great favourite with the masses. The tabla, pakhawaj, and other percussion instruments have their utility, and I am not decrying them. What I mean is that rhythm being easily felt, the faster the tempo the greater the excitement, and so we see two tablas accompanying instrumentalists, ignoring decibel orders.

Of the extant music forms, the *dhrupad*, which is the most ancient style, is breathing its last because people have little time to sit back and let its grandeur seep through them. The *khayāl* is still the most popular form of classical music. To satisfy the 'consumer', the accent is now on *taiyāri*—jet speed—though the raga structure may be sacrificed; this is evident in its *tān* and *jhāla* aspects. There is no denying

the fact that many more opportunities are now available for the young musician—Government grants and scholarships, provision for participation in foreign exchange programmes, etc, so much so that performances abroad have become a status symbol.

Shall I use this alarmingly: *Music Activity Has Increased!* The Government as well as the corporate sector are all out for promoting new talent. Admirable, no doubt, but young performers are now not keen on going through the arduous *tālīm* without which a Faiyaz Khan or Kesarbai Kerkar cannot be produced. All India Radio has been a great promoter of classical music. The same cannot be said of television; if anything, it has proved to be detrimental to it. With the accent on ads, music has to stand or fall by its marketable qualities.

We may list some remedial factors:

1. Music should be introduced at the school level when the mind is most plastic. All children may not, and certainly will not, be musicians, but the seed of good listening will be sown in them.
2. Musicians and musicologists should be included in the selection boards of Government academies and institutions.
3. Small music functions, workshops, seminars, music appreciation courses, etc should be encouraged throughout the year instead of gala shows which cost a lot of money but produce very little lasting effect. □

A REQUEST TO YOU, DEAR READERS!

In this super-technology age, your children must naturally be interested only in computer and other career-based studies. They may also enjoy viewing the TV. But as parents, you know the responsibility. You know the dangers your dear children are prone to in this terrible modern society. So you must be aware of the urgent need to instill moral and spiritual values in them. In what way are you doing this? Do you make them pray daily? Do you tell them stimulating stories? Do you make your children read scriptures like the Gita? Could you please share your experiences with our readers? Without quoting anyone, please send your ideas in not more than 150 words to The Editor, Prabuddha Bharata, PO Mayavati, Dt Champawat 262524. The last date of receipt of your ideas is 31 December 2000. The best ideas will be published. The title of your write-up could be 'WHAT WE DO AT HOME.' On cover, 'My Thoughts' your name, address, etc must be mentioned.

RELIGION AND LIFE

Swami Bhuteshanandaji's Answers to Questions

The questions and answers being serialized in these columns are not meant to be scholarly expositions of various issues. People from different walks of life used to meet Swami Bhuteshanandaji Maharaj daily during his tenure as President of the Ramakrishna Order, and discuss with him their problems and doubts; and Revered Maharaj would clear their doubts in a characteristically simple way. These questions and answers were recorded and read out to him before he approved them all for publication.

On the full-moon night of Rāsa, the gopis ran to Sri Krishna, hearing the sound of his flute coming from the forest. But why did he ask them to go back home?

The Lord tried to scare the gopis away in many ways. Of them, the first was the fear of protecting their bodies, the second was the fear of public censure, and the third was the fear of losing their virtue. When the gopis went to Krishna hearing the sound of his flute, the Lord said, 'There are numerous dangerous animals around and you have come to this almost impregnable dense forest at night. Why did you do so? If you delicate women are attacked by ferocious animals, you can't do anything.' He further said, 'You have definitely not come here for hunting; why have you come then? If the sylvan beauty is what draws you here, then see the forest bathed in moonlight and return home soon. You have work back home: you have to attend to your relatives and look after the children. What a silly thing you have done by running here! What will people say of you!' Next Krishna said: 'Granted that you have come here listening to my flute. But can that be an excuse for you to come out to this jungle thus at dead of night?'

With these words Krishna pointed out to the gopis their faults. In fact he was testing them.

Maharaj, did the gopis pass Krishna's test?

Oh yes, they did, and with flying colours! How beautifully has this been explained in the *Bhāgavata*! The Lord was playing his flute melodiously from within the dense forest and it was not falling on everyone's ears; it was being heard only by those ardent aspirants who waited always for this melodious music. Sound is there for everyone's ears, but can everyone hear? Those who are without that sharp ear to listen, and those who are busy with their household activities cannot hear this. But it reaches the gopis' ears all right. The details are interesting. Maybe a gopi was serving her husband, maybe another was caring for her child, maybe yet another was cooking—but as soon as this flute was heard they gave up all their activities and ran to the Lord as they were. It is said that one of the gopis was locked up in her room; she could not come out. Her soul was panting desperately to go to the Lord. She saw that her body alone was the problem—the obstacle—to reach the Lord. So she gave up her body and ran to him.

[Please note: *Rāsa Pūrṇimā* will be celebrated on the 11th of this month.]

Sri Krishna told Arjuna in the Gītā that his devotees will not perish—'na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati.' How is it possible?

Even as God is eternal, the devotee too is eternal. The human body will die, no doubt, but the Self is immortal. God never allows his devotee to perish because through life-cycles, the devotee remains the dear servant of God.

The way things are going on at present, honesty appears to have little value. Why is this so?

You see, he who is honest will himself have to pay the price. If you are honest, you will have to sacrifice much. But the more you can sacrifice for the sake of truth, the greater will be the evaluation of your honesty and the more will be your joy and peace.

Maharaj, the Hindu religion is being slighted both at home and abroad. What should we do about this?

There is no use in refuting such criticisms in newspapers by writing letters etc. Do your best to uphold the glory of the Hindu religion in your life. If you make your life glorious and be shining examples of the great religion, then that will influence others in the course of time.

What is the granthi in the mind?

Granthi are desires. *Granthi* means knot—the knot which binds two things. The knots of desire bind us to the world. Renouncing all worldly desires is called severing the knots of the world.

What is buddhi?

Buddhi is a modification or *vṛtti* of the inner organ (*antaḥkāraṇa*). That which decisively reveals an object is called the intellect or *buddhi*. When the mind becomes pure, the *buddhi* also becomes pure. When *buddhi* becomes pure the Self is reflected as it is in it. Sri Ramakrishna has said that the pure intellect and the Self are one and the same. When the mirror is clean there will be no obstruction to its reflection; so also the pure mind will not create any obstruction to the reflection of the Self. When the pure mind expresses itself as the pure *buddhi*, it becomes the pure Self. So Sri Ramakrishna has said: 'Pure mind, Pure Buddhi, Pure Atman—all these are one and the same'

[*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 802].

Indriyāṇi parāṇyāhur-

indriyebhyaḥ param manah;

Manasastu parā buddhir-

yo buddheḥ paratastu saḥ. —Gitā, 3.42.

That is, the senses are great, greater than them is the mind, greater than the mind is the intellect, but the greatest of all is God. Why has it been said that he is beyond the *buddhi*? That is because, the *buddhi* is also a *vṛtti*. The Ātman is not a *vṛtti* and so it is beyond the intellect.

How are the thought waves of the individual mind connected with the supreme Mind?

Biologists say that the body is a collection of cells; the body is controlled by them. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* [3.7.15] says: 'Yah sarveṣu bhūteṣu tiṣṭhan, sarvebhyo bhūtebhyo'ntaraḥ, yaṁ sarvāṇi bhūtāni na viduḥ, yasya sarvāṇi bhūtāni śariram, yaḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni antaro yamayati, eṣa ta ātmāntaryāmi amṛtaḥ.' The meaning is, 'He who is in every being but within them, whom no being knows, whose body is all beings, and who controls all beings from within, is the inner Controller. That is your own Self.' This is a remarkable statement. He dwells in all beings but is different from beings. All beings are 'mine' because all are the body of the supreme Being, but they don't know 'me'. It's a beautiful paradox. It is he who resides in all beings and controls them. So it is the reflection of the supreme Mind that is the individual's mind. The thoughts of the cosmic mind are reflected to a slight extent in the individual mind. He resides in us and controls us. It is not like an instrument, mechanically controlling from outside. He is the inner Controller. The Self inside you is the *antaryāmi*. If the body dies, he does not die. He is different from the body.

—compiled by Smt Manju Nandi Mazumdar

On Leading a Successful and Happy Life

*We thank our readers for their overwhelming response to the paradox, 'IN MODERN SOCIETY, CAN YOU LEAD A SUCCESSFUL AND HAPPY LIFE BY BEING PERFECTLY MORAL?' We could publish only a few opinions for want of space. The earnest appeal of many of our participants is that we **certainly can and should lead perfectly moral lives.** Happiness, many contributors felt, is secondary; and its dimensions too are varied. Let us remember Swami Vivekananda's words: 'Truth does not pay homage to any society, ancient or modern. Society has to pay homage to Truth or die. ... That society is the greatest, where the highest truths become practical. ...and if society is not fit for the highest truths, make it so; and the sooner, the better. Stand up, men and women, in this spirit, dare to believe in the Truth, dare to practise the Truth! The world requires a few hundred bold men and women.' The simple, eternal rule is that dharma will protect those who protect it. The world is ruled by a moral order (ṛta); going against it will bring misery. Again, it's a question of where our faith is and not what we do. Thirdly, there may be millions of objects producing happiness, but if our conscience is not clear, life becomes miserable. If we are morally strong and hold on to God, there is no prick of conscience; there is faith; there is courage and strength. These will make us the happiest people. This indeed is success. So no compromise then!*

Lt-Col Avtar Singh (47, Indian Army): Even in present-day mayhem, people leading a perfect moral life are respected in public life; and this respect flows from the hearts of the people. At the same time, there may be certain influential people who may not be facing open condemnation from the public for fear of reprisals, but it should not be construed that this section commands similar respect as the former. An individual endowed with the grace of wisdom will be farthest from immorality. One may be in any profession, but it is perfectly natural to lead a moral, yet successful and happy life.

Smt Rama Varma (55, retd. teacher, New Delhi): One can lead a successful life by being perfectly moral if one is a true spiritual seeker. Happiness comes from faith, confidence and devotion. Wholehearted surrender to God removes all pain and suffering. Virtues like truthfulness, love, compassion, humility, etc, when practised can transform not only individuals but the whole nation.

C.U. Bhasker (65, retd. bank officer, Bangalore): It would be nothing short of a wonder if a morally upright person can find success

and happiness, especially while trying to further his career. In today's workaday world such a person is even looked down upon as useless. Sticking to strict morality is only a comfort which one can indulge in the evening of one's life, or within the environs of a truly holy place.

Madan Mohan Chatrabasi (61, Calcutta): Real success and happiness lie in raising ourselves from the animal level to the moral level and from the moral level to the spiritual level. My goal is to advance spiritually. So in modern society also I will be happy by being perfectly moral.

Smt Nalini Bhat (53, housewife, Mangalore): We should know that happiness is always within us. The quality of our life is more important than anything else, because that is what brings us happiness and success. We should practise what we learn from the scriptures, knowing that our daily life is an inseparable part of divine life. We must make our thoughts, words, and deeds coincide. Herein lie true success and happiness.

P.K. Banerjee (70, Calcutta): My answer is an emphatic yes. I have been moral all my

life with very good results. Success, however, should not always be equated with money, power, or fame. The love and esteem of near and dear ones, contentment, peace of mind, faith in God, etc, are no mean gains. We may not be able to earn fabulously by being perfectly honest. But then, money, more than is necessary for a modest lifestyle, always puts us into all sorts of troubles.

Dharitri Kumar Das Gupta (62, retd. bank official, Calcutta): Can anybody name a single person who has reached the acme of success without being honest? We survive the trials and tribulations of life being nourished by moral standards eternally and universally held valid. Though success may elude some of us, it is human to fight against odds and find happiness, which is within us. Indeed, this spirit is the measure of human excellence.

Dr C.S. Shah (52, physician, Aurangabad): If by any chance we understand that we are not body-mind compendiums, but that our true nature is divine, there is a chance of leading a happy and contented life. As a beneficial side-effect of this understanding one also becomes moral and ethical.

Abhijit Baidya (22, student, Calcutta University): Though it is difficult to be perfectly moral, it is the only way to attain real happiness. Some people blame society for their own immorality. The truth is, they don't want to be moral. Swami Vivekananda suffered tremendously for 12 years, but didn't he achieve great success at last?

C. Achuta Menon (91, advocate, Calicut): If one is perfectly moral one will have no regrets in life. A certain degree of success will be an indirect result of a high degree of correctness in action. But each commendable trait has some marginal consequences also. In modern life, one can have a happy and successful life by being perfectly moral, provided one is also hard-working.

Anil L. Deshpande (61, retd. lecturer, Dhamangaon): Since modern society offers more temptations, it may be assumed that at least in this respect it differs from ancient so-

ciety. But a one-pointed life dedicated to, say, spirituality, social service or scientific research, diminishes the force of the temptations, because our energies are concentrated. The main ingredient which makes life healthy is a perfectly moral environment.

Avijit Dutta (40, chartered accountant, Calcutta): The aura that emanates from morality harmonizes us with the universe, vitalizes the inner self, rejuvenates us and bridges the gulf between material gains and fulfilment. Morality is indeed the essence of happiness, and the condiment that gives success its flavour.

S. Natarajan (69, retd. Addl. Manager, Indian Railways): Though a person may be deeply committed to rectitude himself, to achieve results in day-to-day transactions he is occasionally driven to make compromises with his conscience. If a moral code is strictly observed all the time, happiness itself may become a casualty. But then, from a different point of view, success is primarily the achievement of one's aims, whereas true happiness results from an attitude of detachment.

N. Ramananda Rao (68, retd. professor, Kollam): Success and happiness in our *present* birth have very little to do with morality. If an immoral person is seen to be successful and happy, he is only enjoying the results of his past good deeds. And then, a perfectly moral life may not bring success and happiness immediately, in this very birth. It all depends upon God's will.

Madhumita Ghose (25, Korean Airlines): Times may change, but none can deny that good is always good and bad is always bad. The success of maintaining perfect morality is to wind back our attention from worldly attraction and be happy and satisfied with whatever we have achieved by the grace of God, without having recourse to immorality.

C.P. Bansal (Jaipur): Those who genuinely believe in the inter-relationship of self-effort and karma, who are not obsessed with worldly desires, and who believe in God—are likely to lead a life of fulfilment by being per-

fectly moral. It is not possible for others to be happy in present-day society.

K. Krishna Prasad (55, engineer, Hyderabad): Success in life is a matter of one's own perception and is therefore subjective. A person with a strong conviction that he should, at all costs, live a value-oriented ethical life derives his satisfaction from actually living such a life. Having lived as per his conviction, he considers himself successful.

Raghavendra Garde (62, Pune): Happiness, a mental condition, depends on the choices we make. Our moral values govern our choices. Success consists in achieving our goal without transgressing the bounds of our moral standards. It is internal, where we judge ourselves; and external as indicated by the fame or wealth we accumulate. Happiness, thus, depends on the dialectic between our choices and success. Leading a perfectly moral life according to dharma was never easy, and is much more difficult now. But despite the path being strewn with difficulties, we can lead a successful and happy life, being perfectly moral. There is immense joy in knowing that we have succeeded by strictly adhering to the moral code we have set for ourselves.

Nityaniranjan Kundu (58, lecturer, Howrah): The root-causes of unhappiness are desire and attachment. If we can learn to be detached, and if we succeed in limiting our desires, we may be happy and successful even in modern society by leading a perfectly moral

life. It is very difficult, but not impossible. What is needed is a deep feeling of contentment within.

Parivrajak Vijnan (62, Kalahandi): A life can be said to be successful only when it attains the Highest, attaining which one has nothing more to achieve. In this inner quest, there is neither competition nor consumerism which may make a life immoral or unscrupulous. What we need is simply a sincere desire and a strong resolution to live a life of peace.

K. Rama Rao (77, retd. principal, Mysore): Success in life is a thing which depends on the goal we set for ourselves and our capacity to achieve it. It is possible to lead a successful life if we are honest, duty-conscious, and self-reliant. A person who has unlimited wants or who is lazy can never find happiness. Introspection will tell us that happiness cannot be bought. It comes to him who strives to keep others happy through his thoughts, words and deeds.

P. Ravi Sekhar (44, DGM of an Internet-based company, Hyderabad): A successful, happy life is impossible without perfect morality. One should not think that a penny saved by shortchanging others is really a penny earned. Even business and commerce have their own ethics, and the businessman who does not adhere to legal standards quickly gets a bad name. The so-called success and happiness gained through unfair means is illusory and short-lived. □

Some Other Excellent Contributors

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Truth Knows No Fences

Having walked for long, Bulhe was tired. He approached the gardener and said: 'I'm Bulhe Shah from Kasur. I'm in search of a spiritual master.' The gardener smiled and continued his work. Bulhe enquired: 'Aren't you Sheikh Inayat Shah, sir?' The gardener smiled again. Bulhe sat down next to him: 'Sir, will you please accept me as your disciple? I've heard about your greatness...' Inayat stopped working and stood up. 'My dear boy,' said he, 'what can I teach you? The secret of God is only this much: on this side He uproots, on the other side He creates.' 'Ah!' cried Bulhe in wonder. Those seemingly ordinary words had thrilled him. Bulhe knelt down beside the Sheikh. 'Please accept me, hazrat,' he cried with passion. The gardener was moved. He lifted the boy up and embraced him tenderly. 'My search is over, sir. I've wandered for days and now I've found you,' said Bulhe, weeping.

The two walked slowly to Inayat's house. For some time, the sheikh was silent. Then he said slowly: 'My dear Bulha, I must be frank with you. I should reveal certain things about myself. ... I am deeply devoted to philosophy—both Islamic and Hindu. I'm a Qadiri. And you know how orthodox Muslims dislike Qadiris. You'll land in serious trouble if you follow my ways. ... I know Kasur—I too was born there. I came away to Lahore and am leading a good life here.' Inayat paused. He went inside, brought some sweets and water. He went inside again. This time, he brought a book. 'Bulha, this's my latest work. I have called it *Dastur-ul Amal*. In this I've written everything about how ancient Hindus struggled to attain salvation. It's all very profound. I've studied their methods of sadhana and classified them into seven stages. The final stage is called the *parama-hamsa* stage.' Bulha listened with keen interest. Inayat said com-

passionately: 'My child, please eat. You have walked a long distance. ... As soon as I saw you, I knew you would be my own. I see a great potential in you. It is the Almighty Himself that has sent you. You see, I'm old. I shall not live long. You should carry the Sufi tradition forward. The light of Truth should shine forth in you...' As he spoke, Inayat's eyes sparkled. There were tears in them.

Bulhe bowed low and said, 'Murshid, I'm grateful that you have accepted me as your disciple. I had heard about you and your other work, *Ishlah-ul Amal*. Those who have read it say that if one hasn't attained to great spiritual heights, it's impossible to write such a book. You are my hadi.' Inayat became grave again. He whispered: 'My ways are different, my boy. People can't understand. The moment you came to me, you have invited trouble.' Bulhe said: 'Hazrat, it's indeed a privilege to be in trouble for the sake of truth.' Once again, the teacher embraced his disciple.



'Your son has betrayed me!' shouted her husband. Bulhe's mother wept bitterly. Her daughters stared at their father. 'Of all the murshids, your son selected a gardener—that Inayat! To crown his mischief, Bulha has chosen a Sufi—a hidden Hindu—as his murshid. And Inayat is from our village! My family is ruined.' The shouts increased. What could Bulhe's mother do but weep? When her husband stormed out, her youngest daughter drew near and consoled her: 'Amma, don't cry. Instead, rejoice. I've heard about that Sheikh. He's a great man. You're blessed to have such a noble son. You'll see, Amma, that in due time our dada will be a famous man.'

Relatives and friends went, but all failed to convince Bulhe to return home. Finally, his father sent word that Bulhe was no more his

son. Bulhe accepted it as the will of Allah. The messenger also gave him a letter. That was from his dear sister. She had written: 'My dear brother, go ahead. You *are* right. I shall take care of Amma. Don't worry. Carry on with your spiritual struggle. Know that one day, your sister too will follow you.' These words brought tears in Bulhe's eyes.

Months rolled by. Under the Sheikh's strict tutelage, Bulhe progressed steadily. The grace of a hadi of Inayat's calibre will never go in vain at all. Soon the shell broke, and out flowed the light that was inside Bulhe.

Those were the times of Aurangzeb, the fanatic, who crushed unorthodoxy. 'Bulha, be careful! Never speak about your beliefs in the open. Our system of Sufism with its great sympathy for Hinduism will never be accepted.' Qadiris were being hounded up and persecuted everywhere. Even Dara Shukoh was murdered. But in spite of his teacher's warnings, Bulhe did not appear to care. His joy would burst forth often, and truths that he saw would come out in public. One day ...

'Hazrat! O Hazrat!' Inayat came out of his house and met his friend. 'What's going on, Hazrat? In the busy market place, your disciple is singing this song, and I've copied it for you.' Inayat read: 'To Bulha people give advise, "O Bulha, go and sit in the mosque." What avails it going to the mosque if the heart has not said the prayer? Without a perfect teacher, your prayers are of no avail ...' The Sheikh's hand shook as he returned the poem. He spoke slowly, 'Where's Bulha now? ... Anyway, do me another favour. Kindly inform him not to see me anymore.'

Bulhe was shocked. He cried, 'What? Forsaken by my teacher? Ah me! ...' He tried to gain entry once more, but in vain. Then he hit upon a plan. A few days later, a girl was seen dancing in front of the local mosque. People were enjoying the performance. The girl sang: 'Never again shall I bear pride for my Raja (ie, God). ... Whom shall I call my own now? The Raja alone knows my condition...' Seeing Inayat approaching, the girl sang louder,

'Never again shall I bear pride for my beloved Raja. Please undo the knots of your heart and laugh with me.' Inayat instantly understood who this 'girl' was. He went near and asked, 'Aren't you Bulha?' 'No, hazrat. I am *bhūlha*—the repentent.' Since that moment, the teacher and taught never parted till the former's death.



Bulhe made rapid strides in his spiritual journey. As years went by, he understood in the depth of his soul that Shyām was the beloved Lord. He composed numerous songs in Punjabi. He sang: 'There is only one dark chamber (the world), without any lamp or wick (hope). Holding my wrist, they (bad actions) are taking me, O Shyām, unaccompanied and companion-less.' He also sang: 'For others you are a cowherd, but I call you Raja. You are my religion and faith.' And he sang: 'In Brindavan, you grazed cattle, invading Lanka you made the sound (of victory), you came as the pilgrim of Mecca; you made wonderful change of forms. What are you hiding yourself from now?' Bulhe understood that the soul has rebirth. He understood karma theory. He understood Advaita was the one ultimate Reality. He sang: '*Rājā Rājā kardī nī mai āpe rājā hoi*, Repeating Raja, Raja, I myself have become Raja.' '*Pāyā hai kujh pāyā hai, satgurū ne allakh lakhāyā hai*, I have found, I have found something. My true guru has made manifest the Unmanifest.'

Like Al-Hallaj, he would repeat often towards the end of his life, '*ana'l-Haqq, ana'l-Haqq*.' Sheikh Inayat Shah passed away soon. Bulhe Shah returned to his native village. He never married. The sister who loved him and his ideals too remained unmarried. She served her brother till his end.

Bulhe Shah's mysticism excelled that of most other Sufis. He is rightly called the greatest Sufi, the Rumi of this sub-continent. This unique saint was born in 1680 and passed away in 1758. Bulhe's tomb is still preserved in Kasur, they say. □

Book Reviews

YOGA—AN EASY APPROACH: By Prem Bhatia. Published by Sterling Publishers, L-10 Green Park Extension, New Delhi 110016. Pp. 136. Rs.75.

The book under review is a comprehensive do-it-yourself manual of various stretching exercises and *yogasanas*. The contents can be divided into two parts. Part 1 deals with the daily exercises and their consequence, accompanied by discourses on various subjects like dietary and sleeping habits, practice of *brahmacharya*, physiological disorders and their remedy, etc. This part also includes answers to the questions raised by practitioners during yoga camps. Part 2 contains photographic illustrations of several yoga postures. Detailed instructions have been given to clarify the many finer aspects of the practice of *yogasanas*. Clear guidelines have been given about how to begin the practice, the prerequisites, the way to proceed, the precautions to be taken, etc. The whole book is descriptive yet comprehensive.

Sterling Publishers are known for their wonderful publications with excellent get-up and printing. Here is another book from them, aimed at helping the masses. This book will surely help beginners to practice yogic postures without the help of teachers, and so it is a valuable addition to the subject.

Dr Chetana Mandavia

Associate Professor

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RELIGIOUS DOCTRINES IN THE MAHABHARATA: By Nicholas Sutton. Published by Motilal Banarsidass, 41-UA Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, New Delhi 110007. 2000. Pp. 447. Rs.250.

The book under review, authored by the Indologist Dr Sutton, is an attempt to present the epic *Mahabharata* as a repository of the principal religious doctrines of the Hindu tradition, as against the widely known perspective that it recounts the exploits of the heroes, gods and villains. This huge monument of Hindu literature has been introduced at the very beginning, making it accessible to one and all. The specific aims of the present study, as enumerated by the author, are: cataloguing of the

various religious tendencies and doctrines, interpretation and explanation of the major themes of the epic and, above all, an exploration of the continuing relevance of the *Mahabharata* in shaping values of our global culture.

The book has twelve chapters. Most of the chapters begin with an introduction and end with a conclusion. This is very useful from the reader's point of view to get a clear picture of the ideas presented in the chapter. The chapters exhibit a concerted effort on the part of the author to explore the teachings of the *Mahabharata* regarding religion. Topics like 'Epic Soteriology', 'Epic Eschatology', and 'Epic Theism' are elaborately considered. The ideals of *pravrtti*, *niivrtti* and *bhakti* find their due and proper place as the major strands of religious thought in the text of the *Mahabharata*. The question of ethics or the moral dimension of the religious doctrines of *Mahabharata* are identified and examined in detail with the hope that the whole world might benefit from the wider dissemination of the moral principles it (the epic) espouses. The chapter on 'Control of Destiny over Human Existence' examines the problem of destiny and free-will in the epic with the contention that there can be no simple solution to the problem of destiny and exertion. The recognition of the roles of both destiny and exertion, to the exclusion of any absolutistic assertion, which is also prominent, has been highlighted as the merit of the epic text. The question on *epic theism* has been considered in detail, taking into account the differing theological perspectives of the *Mahabharata*. The complexities of the text regarding the subject has been reduced to the minimum by recognizing the monotheistic character of the epic's theology, which means the existence of one God who is the creator and controller of all things and who also exists beyond them. The contemporary relevance of the teachings of the *Mahabharata* becomes all the more evident in its reconciling with the contemporary liberal consensus towards gender equality with the scriptural perspective. The philosophy of *moksa dharma* as providing the basis for an egalitarian understanding of humanity has been discussed as legitimately recognized in the epic.

The book concludes with an elaborate Bibliography and Index. *Religious Doctrines in the Mahabharata*, while presenting the principal doctrinal tendencies and specific answers to major questions of religious thinking as seen in the *Mahabharata*, ultimately recognizes that *Mahabharata* represents a rich diversity of Hindu religious ideas, challenging the reader to accept diversity rather than a rigid

creed. The volume, packed with interesting observations and insights and making an absorbing reading, is bound to engender fresh interest in understanding the currents of religious thought embodied in the text.

Dr D. Nesy
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THE FATEHNAMA OF GURU GOBIND SINGH: Translated by Ms Jasbir Kaur Ahuja. Published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kulapati Munshi Marg, Mumbai 400007. 1999. Pp. 68. Rs.60.

This elegant book contains the translation of the epistle 'Fatehnama' written by Sri Guru Gobind Singhji to Emperor Aurangzeb and narrates in detail the most trying circumstances under which it was written. Miss Ahuja has related the martyrdom episode of the young children of Guru Gobind Singhji, aged seven and five, with great poignancy and pathos. The pleadings of the Nawab of Malerkotla for sparing their lives, and his letter to the relentless emperor seeking clemency bore no results. The inhuman and brutal tortures the innocent children had to undergo are exceedingly heart-rending. Miss Ahuja has reproduced the Nawab's letter to the emperor in the original (Persian) with its English translation. Guru Gobind Singhji wrote to Aurangzeb his first historic letter, namely, the Fatehnama.

The inspiring biography of Guru Gobind Singhji has enlivened the booklet. His fully integrated personality with its three facets of a saint, soldier and scholar have been brought out well. Guruji had realized from his childhood that he was living in such troubled times which would not allow peaceful civilized life on the spiritual plane. Thus the Khalsa was created.

Fatehnama is a unique achievement in the history of literature. It reaffirms the eternal value of Indian culture that 'Truth alone triumphs.' Victory and defeat are to be judged by the ultimate standards of morality and not by material gain. Guru Gobind Singhji has stressed the freedom of the spirit of Khalsa with goodwill towards all and the inculcation of moral values. He indicated in no uncertain terms that he took up the sword as a last resort.

Translating poetry is not an easy task. It is an art in which the translator is well versed. She has beautifully accomplished the difficult task she has un-

dertaken. Undoubtedly this book is a valuable addition to Gurmat literature, which only a persevering and dedicated scholar could produce. I congratulate Miss Jasbir Kaur Ahuja for her successful translation.

Mrs Mohinder Kaur
Editor
Panchbati Sandesh

THE GITA AND ITS CULTURE: By R.K. Chatterjee. Published by New Dawn/Sterling Publishers, Delhi 110016. 2000. Pp. 93. Rs.95.

The *Gītā* is known to be the greatest cultural and spiritual treasure of mankind. It would be a great blunder if the *Gītā* is considered a religious document only. The religion explained in the *Gītā* is the religion of man. Its teacher, Sri Krishna, was a humane teacher, and on the eve of the Kurukshetra war he inspired Arjuna, enunciating the philosophy of *niskāma karma*. His discourses have established a spiritual and cultural basis for Hinduism in particular and humanity itself in general. The *Gītā* has been translated into almost all the languages of the world. It has a universal appeal not only in the spiritual and metaphysical levels but also in the regeneration of the social values of human life.

The Gita and its Culture is not a new translation of the whole of the *Gītā*; only 194 select verses have been translated into English with Sanskrit original while another 116 have been introduced in English translation without the Sanskrit version. The translation of the verses is excellent and bears the spirit of the original. While dealing with the spiritual aspects of the *Gītā*, the writer deals with three special features in the social context. These are the *varṇāśrama dharma*, the caste system, and the position of women in society. Chatterjee has discussed these three systems in the light of modern life. The theory of life according to the *Gītā* bears an eternal appeal. Its relevance is the same today also.

The book contains not only the English translation of verses but also its voice explained in a very presentable manner based on facts and logical dimension. *The Gita and its Culture* will be treated as a learned addition to the *Gītā* literature.

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News and Reports

New Mission Centre

A branch centre of the Ramakrishna Mission has been started in Jammu under the name *Ramakrishna Mission (Advaita Ashrama), Udhowala, Jammu*, with the land, building, etc received from the Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Jammu. The address of the centre is: Ramakrishna Mission (Advaita Ashrama), Udhowala, PO Aquilpur, Jammu 180002 (Phone: 0191-554788).

West India Drought Relief

Several parts of the states of Gujarat and Rajasthan were severely affected by drought owing to reduced rainfall in those areas this year. Some details of the relief work done by two branch centres of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission in these states are given below:

Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot, in April, distributed foodgrains, pulses, edible oil, cooking utensils, garments, etc to 33 affected families. In addition to this, 108 families were given 10,360 kg of fodder and 10,000 litres of water for their 1036 cattle. In May, the centre distributed 600,000 litres of water, and foodgrains, pulses, oil, vegetables, utensils, garments and footwear among 750 families belonging to 18 villages of Rajkot district. 50 tonnes of fodder and 40,000 litres of water were given to their 3000 head of cattle. The Ashrama also distributed 6000 kg of foodgrains, 500 kg of pulses, 1000 kg of *gur* and 1000 assorted garments among 1000 persons working under a food-for-work programme at 10 worst-affected villages of the remote Kutch district. 3250 kg of dry fodder were also given for their 600 head of cattle. In June, 620,000 litres of water, 23,408 kg of foodgrains, 3084 kg of pulses, 1260 kg of vegetables, 2031 kg of various food items, 50 sets of utensils, 7300 sets of garments and 2750 pairs of footwear were distributed among 5267 people of 860 families belonging to 57 villages of Rajkot and Kutch districts. 80,000 litres of water and 143 tonnes of fodder were provided for 18,000 head of cattle. In July, the Ashrama distributed 72 tonnes of fodder to 1000 cattle in 6 villages of Rajkot and Bhavnagar districts.

During the four months of April-July, *Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Memorial, Porbandar*, set up kitchens at various relief sites where about 350 people were fed daily. Arrangements were made for providing drinking-water, shelter and 1250 kg of fodder daily for 250 cows. In addition to this, 220 tonnes of dry fodder was sent to 55 cowsheds of Porbandar and Jamnagar districts for their 6000 cattle. As requested by the Govt of Gujarat, the

centre provided nutritious food including nearly 40 tonnes of groundnuts and *gur*, and 6.30 tonnes of roasted gram to 7500 labourers working in 15 government-run relief camps, and to 700 poor and handicapped people. Besides, kits consisting of waterpots, bedsheets, toilet soaps and other necessities were made available to 3050 families working in the above projects. In July alone, the centre distributed more than 25,000 kg of foodgrains, 1400 kg of pulses and 1120 kg of groundnuts among 4500 families in Porbandar and nearby villages. It also constructed a check-dam at Vadala village under a food-for-work scheme.

Orissa Cyclone Rehabilitation

Plans are afoot for constructing 330 cyclone-proof houses and three school-cum-cyclone shelters at Kanaguli village of Ersama block in Jagatsinghpur district. Out of the 112 houses so far taken up for construction, brickwork has been done for six houses up to roof level, for 96 houses up to lintel level, and for two houses up to plinth level. Besides, excavation work for 12 toilet blocks and work on the high school and middle school buildings is in progress. Sinking of two tube-wells, each about 600 feet deep, has been completed and that of the third tube-well is in progress.

A team of scientists from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research visits the area from time to time and gives technical guidance and requisite materials to the farmers to improve the yield of their fields which were flooded by saline water during the cyclone.

At Kotang village of Kakatpur block in Puri district, casting of the roof slab for the middle school has been completed and the construction work for the high school and the primary school has been done up to the first floor level. Besides, work on the pilot bore for a tube-well is in progress. This project is being executed by the Ramakrishna Mission Headquarters in collaboration with Ramakrishna Math, Puri. Sri Surendranath Suranayak, Minister for Panchayat Raj, Govt of Orissa, visited the rehabilitation camp at Kotang on 25 June 2000.

Mission Students Bag Top Ranks

A student of our Chengalpattu (Tamil Nadu) school stood second in the state level SSLC examination this year, and the students of schools run by the Ramakrishna Mission secured the following positions in the West Bengal secondary examination: Asansol, 6th; Baranagore, 5th and 9th; Malda, 6th; and Purulia, 8th.